to allow the appeal, and once more to place the whole question in the pope's hand. The Earl of Arundel with a dozen peers and bishops was despatched at once to Sens to explain what had happened, and to request Alexander to send legates to England to investigate the quarrel and to end it. The archbishop, could he have consented to be quiet, might have remained unmolested at Canterbury till the result could be ascertained. But he knew too well the forces which would be at work in the papal court to wait for its verdict. His confidence was only in himself. Could he see the pope in person, he thought that he could influence him. He was sure of the friendship of Lewis of France, who was meditating a fresh quarrel with Henry, and would welcome his support. His own spiritual weapons would be as effective across the Channel as if used in England, while he would himself be in personal security. One dark night he went down with his two companions into Sandwich, and in an open boat he crossed safely to Gravelines. At St. Omer he fell in with his old friend the Justiciary de Luci, who was returning from a mission to the court of France. De Luci urged him to go back to England and wait for the pope's decision, warning him of the consequences of persisting in a course which was really

treasonable, and undertaking that the king would forgive him if he would return at once. Entreaties and warnings were alike thrown away. He remained and despatched a letter to the pope, saying briefly that he had followed the example of his Holiness in resisting the encroachments of princes, and had fled from his country. He had been called to answer before the king as if he had been a mere layman. The bishops, who ought to have stood by him, had behaved like cowards. If he was not sustained by his Holiness, the Church would be ruined, and he would himself be doubly confounded.

V.

THE king and the English bishops looked with reasonable confidence to the result of their appeal. Becket had broken his promise to submit to the Constitutions, and had so broken it as to show that the promise had been given in conscious bad faith. He was a defaulting public officer. He had defied the Crown and the estates of the realm. He had refused to answer for his conduct, and had denied his responsibilities. He had deserted his post, and had fled from the realm, although the king's proclamation

had left him without the excuse that he was in fear of personal violence. He was an archbishop, and possessed, in virtue of his office, of mysterious powers which the laity had not yet learned to despise. But the pope was superior to him in his own sphere, and on the pope the king naturally felt that he had a right to rely. The Earl of Arundel, with other peers, the Archbishop of York, and the Bishops of London, Chichester, and Exeter, who had been selected as envoys, went off immediately on the dissolution of the Northampton meeting. They crossed the Channel on the same night that Becket crossed, and after a hasty and unsatisfactory interview with Lewis at Compiègne they made their way to Sens. Becket ought to have met them there. But Becket preferred to feel his ground and make friends in France before presenting himself. He was disappointed in the Count of Flanders, who declined to countenance him. He escaped in disguise over the French frontier, and addressed himself to Lewis at Soissons. Lewis, who meant no good to Henry, received him warmly, and wrote in his favour to the pope. At the French court he remained till he saw how matters would go at Sens, sending forward his confidential friend, Herbert of Bosham, to watch the proceedings, and to speak for him to the pope and cardinals.

Henry's embassy. The English bishops stated their case. They laid the blame of the quarrel on the archbishop's violence. They explained the moderation of the king's demands. They requested the pope's interposition. The Earl of Arundel followed in the name of the English barons. He dwelt on the fidelity with which the king had adhered to the Holy See in its troubles, and the regret with which, if justice was denied them, the English nation might be compelled to look elsewhere. He requested, and the bishops requested, that Becket should be ordered to return to Canterbury, and that a legate or legates should be sent with plenary powers to hear the cause and decide upon it.

Seeing that the question immediately before the pope did not turn on the Constitutions, but on the liability of the archbishop to answer for his civil administration, the king was making a large concession. Many cardinals had their own good reasons for being on the king's side, and, if left to himself, the pope would have been glad to oblige a valuable friend. But to favour Henry was to offend Lewis, under whose shelter he had taken refuge. The French bishops were many of them as violent as

Alexander was in the same difficulty in which Pope Clement found himself three centuries later between Henry the Eighth and Charles the Fifth. He said that he could form no resolution till he had heard what Becket had to say. He suggested that the English envoys should wait for Becket's arrival; but it was uncertain when Becket might arrive; his French friends were gathering in their rear, and might intercept their return. A protracted stay was impossible, and they again pressed for a legate. Alexander agreed to send some one, but without the ample powers which the envoys desired. He reserved the final decision for himself.

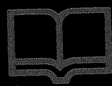
The influences by which the papal court was determined were already too grossly notorious. A decision given in France would be the decision which would please the King of France. The envoys went home, taking with them a complimentary nuncio from the pope, and they had some difficulty in escaping an attempt to waylay and capture them.

They had no sooner gone than Becket appeared at Sens. He was received with no great warmth by the pope, and still more coldly by the cardinals,

His cause was openly espoused by the French nation. At his second interview, on his knees at Alexander's feet, he represented that he was the victim of his devotion to the Holy See and the Catholic faith. He had only to yield on the Constitutions to be restored at once to favour and power. The Constitutions were read over, and he asked how it was possible for him to acknowledge laws which reduced the clergy into common mortals, and restricted appeals to the last depositary of justice on earth.

Herbert of Bosham states that the pope and cardinals had never yet seen the Constitutions, but had only heard of them. This is simply incredible, and, like many other stories of this interesting but interested writer, is confuted by the facts of the case. John of Salisbury had said that the proceedings at Clarendon were better known on the continent than in England. They had been watched in France for almost a year with the closest attention. Bishops and abbots had gone to and fro between the pope and the English court with no other object than to find some terms of compromise. It is not conceivable

[1] 'Quorum nares odor lucri infecerat.'



that after sending an order to Beck
after Becket had first consented, had t
himself for the sin of acquiescence,
absolved by Alexander himself, the
should never have acquainted him
particulars of the controversy. It is no
therefore, that, after hearing the Con
the pope should have severely blam
Herbert also says that he did, for
consented at all. Be this as it may,
tions found no favour. Parts of the
tolerable, but parts intolerable, espe
striction of the appeals. Again the
for reflection. English money had se
ful faction among his advisers, and
ungrateful.[1] Henry, they said, wou
modify the objectionable articles; and
to alienate him during the Germa

[1] The pope himself was anxious about his English Peter's pence, being afraid, if he quarrelled with Henry, that he might lose a valuable part of his revenue. After Becket retired to Pontigny, Alexander wrote to Foliot on the subject, suggesting that if the Peter's pence were not collected, the bishop should either advance the sum exp
purse, or else
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Materials, v
208–11.

private they sharply blamed Becket for having raised so inopportune a storm; and but for his own adroitness the archbishop would have been defeated after all. Once more he sought the pope's presence. He confessed his sins, and he tempted Alexander with the hope of rescuing the nomination to the see of Canterbury from secular interference. He had been intruded into Christ's sheepfold, he said, by the secular power;[1] and from this source all his subsequent troubles had arisen. The bishops at Northampton had required him to resign. He could not resign at their bidding, but he threw himself and his office on his Holiness's mercy. He had accepted the archbishopric uncanonically. He now relinquished it, to be restored or not restored as the pope might please.

It was a bold stroke, and it nearly failed. Many cardinals saw in the offer a road out of the difficulty. Terms could now be arranged with Henry, and Becket could be provided for elsewhere. For some hours or days his friends thought his cause was lost.

[1] 'Ascendi in ovile Christi, sed non per ipsum ostium; velut quem non canonica vocavit electio, sed terror publicæ potestatis intrusit.' *Materials*, vol. ii. p. 343. But all these accounts of conversations must be received with caution. The accounts vary irreconcilably; and the enthusiasm of the biographers for their master and his cause infects every line of their narratives.

But the balance wavered at last so far in his favour that the sacrifice was not permitted. He was not, as he had expected, to be sent back to England, supported by threats of interdict and excommunication, to triumph over his enemies. But he was reinstated as archbishop. He was assigned a residence at the Cistercian monastery of Pontigny, thirty miles from Sens; and there he was directed to remain quiet and avoid for the present irritating the king further.[1]

The king was sufficiently irritated already. The support which Lewis had given to Becket meant too probably that war with France was not far off. Becket himself was virtually in rebellion, and his character made it easy to foresee the measures which he would adopt if not prevented. The posts were watched; strangers were searched for letters. English subjects were forbidden to introduce brief, bull, or censure either from the pope or from the archbishop. The archbishop's estates were sequestrated. If he was allowed to retain his large income and to spend it abroad, he would use it to buy friends among the cardinals. The see was put under administrators; the rents, so Henry afterwards swore, were chiefly

[1] The answer supposed to have been given by the pope, permitting him to use the censures, belongs to the following year. It refers to the sequestration of the Canterbury estates, and this did not take place till after Becket had been settled at Pontigny.

laid out in management; and the surplus was distributed in charity. The incumbents of the archbishop's benefices being his special creatures were expelled, and loyal priests were put in their places. Another harder measure was adopted. All his relations, all his connections and dependants, except a few who gave securities for good conduct, were banished from England, four hundred of them, men, women, and children. Either it was feared the archbishop would employ them to disturb the country, or it was mere vengeance, or it was to make Becket an expensive guest to Lewis.[1]

All this Becket was obliged to bear with. Armed as he was with lightnings, he was forbidden to make use of them. Nay, worse, the pope himself could not even yet be depended on. The king wrote to propose that Alexander should visit him in England, or, if this were impossible, that the pope, Lewis, and

[1] Cruel as this measure was, there was precedent for it. Foliot reminds Becket that he had himself been treated with equal severity for opposing his elevation to the Primacy: 'Quod loquimur experti novimus; attendentes enim ecclesiam Dei suffocari graviter, ob quod in ejus libertatem quodammodo proclamavimus, verbum illico proscriptionis audivimus et exsilio crudeliter addicti sumus; nec solum persona nostra, sed et domus patris mei, et conjuncta nobis affinitas et cognatio tota. Hoc quidem calice et aliis propinatum est.'—Foliot to Becket. *Materials*, vol. v. p. 524.

Henry should meet in Normandy and take measures together for the common welfare of Christendom. Henry had no wish to join Barbarossa if he could help it; and neither the pope nor Lewis could wish to force him. If such a meeting came off, it was easy to foresee the issue. John of Salisbury, who was Becket's agent at the French court, when he heard what was intended, wrote that it must be prevented at all hazards. In terms not very complimentary to the holy father's understanding, the archbishop implored Alexander to consent to no meeting with the king of England, except one at which he should himself be present. 'The king,' he said, 'is so subtle with his words that he would confound the apostolic religion itself. He will find the weak points of the pope's character, and will trip him up to his destruction.'[1]

The King of France (John of Salisbury wrote to Becket) admits that he fears to urge the pope to use the censures in your behalf. If this be so now, how will it be when our king is here in person, arguing, promising, threatening, and swaying the minds of men after his fashion? He has secured Count Robert—the countess, like a prudent matron, is thinking of marriages for her children and has sent him three

[1] 'Sed et citius poterit apostolica circumveniri religio ex varietate verborum regis . . . et si rex infirmiora domini papæ prænoverit exitus viarum suarum obstruet offendiculis.'—*Materials*, vol. ii. p. 346.

hundred ells of linen to make shirts. The Archbishop of Rheims is the count's dear friend. . . . I advise you, therefore, to trust in God and give yourself to prayer. Put away thoughts of this world: pray and meditate. The Psalms will be better reading for you than philosophy; and to confer with spiritual men, whose example may influence your devotion, will profit you more than indulging in litigious speculations. I say this from my heart: take it as you please.[1]

These words show Becket to us as through an inverted telescope, the magnifying mist blown away, in his true outlines and true proportions. The genuine Becket, as the pope knew him, was not the person peculiarly fitted to be the Church's champion in a cause which was really sacred. John of Salisbury thought evidently at this time that there was no longer any hope that the archbishop would really succeed. He wished, he said in a letter to the Bishop of Exeter, to make his peace with the king. He could not desert the archbishop, but he was loyal to his sovereign. He called God to witness how often he had rebuked the archbishop for his foolish violence.[2] He could not promise that he

[1] *Materials*, vol. v. p. 162, abridged.

[2] 'Novit enim cordium inspector quod saepius et asperius quam aliquis mortalium corripuerim dominum archiepiscopum de his in quibus ab initio dominum regem et suos zelo quodam inconsultius visus est ad amaritudinem provocasse,' &c.—*Letters*, vol. i. p. 203, ed. Giles.

would quit his old master's service, but in all else he would be guided by the Bishop of Exeter's advice.

VI.

MEANWHILE the quarrel between Becket and the King of England became the topic of the hour throughout Europe. Which was right and which was wrong, what the pope would do or ought to do, and whether England would join Germany in the schism—these questions were the theme of perpetual discussions in council and conclave, were debated in universities, and were fought over at convent and castle dinner-tables. Opinions were so divided that, in a cause which concerned Heaven so nearly, people were looking for Heaven to give some sign. As facts were wanting, legend took the place of them, and stories began to spread, either at the time or immediately after, of direct and picturesque manifestations of grace which had been vouchsafed in Becket's favour. It was said that when dining with Pope Alexander he had twice unconsciously turned water into wine. At Pontigny he had been graciously visited by Our Lady herself. He had left

England ill provided with clothes. His wardrobe was in disorder; his drawers especially, besides being dirty, were in holes. He was specially delicate in such matters, and was too modest to confess his difficulties. He stayed at home one day alone to do the repairs himself. He was pricking his fingers and succeeding indifferently, when Our Lady—who, as one of the biographers tells us, had been taught to sew when she was at Nazareth—came in, sat down, took the drawers out of the archbishop's hand, mended them excellently, and went as she had come. The archbishop had not recognized his visitor. Soon after a singular case of Church discipline was referred to his decision. A young Frenchman, specially devoted to the Virgin Mary, had built a chapel in her honour not far from Pontigny, had placed her image over the altar, and had obtained ordination himself that he might make his daily offerings there; but he neither would nor could repeat any mass but the mass of the Virgin. The authorities reprimanded him, but to no purpose. Our Lady filled his soul, and left no room for any other object. The irregularity was flagrant—the devotion was commendable. Becket was consulted as to what should be done, and Becket sent for the offender and gently put before him that he was making a scandal which

must positively cease. The youth rushed away in despair, and flung himself before Our Lady's image, declaring that his love was for her and for her alone; she must save him from interference, or he would pull the chapel down and do other wild and desperate things. The eyes of the image began to smile, the neck bent, the lips opened. 'Have no fear, *carissime*,' it said, 'go to the archbishop. Entreat again to be allowed to continue your devotions to me. If he refuses, ask him if he remembers who mended his drawers.' We may guess how the story ended.

With tales of this kind floating in the air, the first year of Becket's exile wore out, the pope giving uncertain answers to the passionate appeals which continued to be made to him, according to the fortune of the Emperor Frederick in Italy. Frederick being at last driven out of Lombardy, the pope recovered heart, and held out brighter prospects. He sent Becket permission to excommunicate the persons in occupation of his estates and benefices, and he promised to ratify his sentence if opportunely issued. He did not permit him to excommunicate the king, but he held out a hope that the prohibition might not last for ever, while Lewis, with Becket's knowledge, and in the opinion of the cardinals who

came afterwards to inquire into his conduct, at Becket's direct instigation, prepared to invade Normandy. Henry, well informed of what was coming, began now to turn to Germany in earnest. By the advice of his barons, as he said, he wrote to Reginald, Frederick's archbishop chancellor, to tell him that he was about to send an embassy to the pope to demand that he should be relieved of Becket, and that the Constitutions should be ratified. If justice was refused him, he and his people were prepared to renounce their allegiance to Alexander and to unite with Germany.[1] The chancellor was himself invited to England. A decided step of this kind, it was thought, might bring the pope to his senses.

Separation from Rome, indeed, was the true alternative; and had the country been prepared to follow Henry, and had Henry himself been prepared at the bottom of his mind to defy the pope and the worst that he could do, the great schism between the Teutonic and Latin races might have been antedated, and the course of history been changed. But Henry was threatening with but half a heart, and the country was less prepared than he. In Germany

[1] Giles, vol. i. p. 316. *Materials*, vol. v. p. 428.

ture. With all its enormous faults, the Roman Catholic organization in both countries was producing better fruits on the whole than any other which could have been substituted for it; and almost three centuries had yet to pass, bringing with them accumulating masses of insincerities and injustices, before Europe could become ripe for a change. A succession of Beckets would have precipitated a rupture, whatever might be the cost or consequences; but the succeeding prelates were men of the world as well as statesmen, and were too wise to press theories to their logical consequences.

The Archbishop of Cologne came to London with the taint of his schism upon him. The court entertained him graciously. But Henry received a startling intimation that he must not try the barons too far. They had supported him in what they held to be reasonable demands, to which the pope might be expected to consent. They were not ready to support him in a revolt from Rome, even though disguised behind the name of antipope. The hunchbacked Earl of Leicester refused Barbarossa's chancellor the kiss of peace in open court at Westminster,

and on his departure the altars at which the schismatic prelate had said mass were destroyed.[1]

Alexander meanwhile had written to Foliot, directing him and the Bishop of Hereford to remonstrate with the king, to entreat him to act in conformity with his past reputation, and to put an end to the scandal which he had caused, hinting that if Henry persisted in refusing he might be unable to restrain the archbishop from excommunicating him. The two bishops discharged their commission. 'The king,' Foliot replied to the pope, 'took what we said in excellent part. He assured us that his affection towards your Holiness remained as it had been, but he said that he had stood by you in your misfortunes, and that he had met with a bad return. He had hindered no one from going to you on your invitation, and he meant to hinder no one. As to appeals, he merely claimed that each case should be first thoroughly heard in his own courts. If justice could not be had there, appeals to Rome might remain without objection from himself. If the emperor was excommunicated, he promised to break off correspondence with him. As to the Archbishop of Canterbury, he had not been expelled from England; he had left

[1] Matthew Paris, *Chronica Majora*, 1165.

it of his own accord, and might return when he pleased. To the Church, now as always, he wished to submit his differences with the archbishop.'

If this was not all which the pope might expect, Foliot advised him to be contented with it. 'The king,' he continued, 'having consented to defer to the Church, considers that right is on his side. Let your Holiness therefore beware of measures which may drive him and his subjects into revolt. A wounded limb may be healed; a limb cut off is lost for ever. Some of us may bear persecution on your account, but there will not be wanting those who will bow their knee to Baal. Men can be found to fill the English sees who will obey the antipope. Many, indeed, already wish for the change.'[1]

The pope, who did not understand the English character, was as much disturbed as Henry could have desired to see him. He found that he had encouraged Becket too far. He wrote to press upon him that the days were evil; that he must endeavour to conciliate the king; that he must on no account excommunicate him, or lay England under interdict, or venture any violent courses, at any rate before the ensuing Easter.[2] He wrote affectionately to Henry

[1] Foliot to the Pope, 1165. Hoveden (ed. Giles), vol. i. p. 231
[2] Giles, vol. i. p. 324.

himself. He thanked the two bishops with the utmost warmth, and expressed himself delighted with the accounts which he received of the king's frame of mind.[1] The Archbishop of Rouen and the Empress Matilda had written to him to the same purpose, and had given him equal pleasure. If Foliot could bring about a reconciliation, he would love him for ever. Meanwhile he would follow Foliot's advice and keep Becket quiet.

A very slight concession from Becket would now have made an arrangement possible, for Henry was tired of the quarrel. He invited the Norman prelates to meet him at a conference at Chinon. The archbishop was expected to attend, and peace was then to have been arranged. In this spirit the Bishop of Hereford addressed the archbishop himself, entreating him to agree to moderate conditions. But far away was Becket from 'conditions.' He knew better than the pope the state of English feeling. He was in correspondence (it is likely enough) with the Earl of Leicester. At all events he must have heard of Leicester's treatment of Reginald of Cologne. He knew that in fearing that England would go into schism the pope was

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[1] 'Gaudemus et exultamus super eâ devotione ejusdem regis.'

frightened by a shadow. He had not defied king, peers, and bishops at Northampton that the fight should end in a compromise. Sharply he rebuked the Bishop of Hereford for his timid counsels. 'For you,' he said, 'I am made anathema, and when you should stand by me you advise me to yield. You should rather have bidden me draw the sword of Peter and avenge the blood of the saints. I mourn over you as over my firstborn. Up, my son. Cry aloud and cease not. Lift up your voice, lest God's anger fall on you and all the nation perish. I grieve for the king. Tribulation impends over him. They have devoured Jacob and laid waste his dwelling-place.'[1]

To John of Salisbury Becket announced that his patience was exhausted, that when Easter was past he would be free, and that in his own opinion he ought to forbear no longer. He desired to know how far his friend agreed with him. John of Salisbury was more prudent than the archbishop. 'Precipitate action,' he said, 'may expose you to ridicule and ruin. You ask my advice. I recommend you not to rely on the Holy See. Write to the empress mother; write to the Archbishop of Rouen and

[1] Becket to the Bishop of Hereford. Hoveden. I am obliged greatly to compress the diffuse rhetoric of the archbishop.

the other prelates. Tell them you are ready to obey the law and to go back to England if you are treated with justice. The adversary will not agree to conditions really fair, but you will have set yourself right with the world. Should the king be more moderate than I think he will be, do not stand upon securities. Content yourself with a promise under the king's hand, and the assurance of the empress mother. Do not try the censures. You know my opinion about this, and you once agreed with me. The king is not afraid of excommunication. The bishops and most of the clergy have stood by him; some may be with us in heart, but they are not to be depended on.'[1]

Becket, like most persons of his temperament, asked advice without meaning to follow it. He addressed the king in a letter which Herbert describes as being of extreme sweetness. It was to entreat him to let loose the Bride of Christ whom he held in captivity, and to warn him that if he persevered in his wicked ways, 'Christ would gird his sword upon his thigh,' and would descend from heaven to punish him. Inflated language of this kind was not general at that time. It was peculiar to Becket, and we need not be surprised that it

[1] John of Salisbury to Becket, April 1166 (abridged).

produced no effect on Henry. He went to Normandy to the Chinon conference immediately after Easter 1166, hoping there to meet Becket and to speak with him and with the other prelates as with reasonable men. He did not find Becket there, but he found a second letter from him, which, if coming from a saint would have tried the temper of a more patient sovereign than Henry, and from a man whom he had known so lately as a defaulting chancellor and unscrupulous politician was insolent and absurd. After reproaching the king for allowing him to live on the charity of Lewis of France, the archbishop proceeded:—

You are my king, my lord, and my spiritual son. As you are my king, I owe you reverence and admonition; as you are my lord, I owe you such obedience as consists with the honour of God; as you are my son, I owe you the chastisement which is due from the father to the child. You hold your authority from the Church, which consists of clergy and laymen. The clergy have sole charge of things spiritual: kings, earls, and counts have powers delegated to them from the Church, to preserve peace and the Church's unity. Delegated from the Church, I say. Therefore it rests not with you to tell bishops whom they may excommunicate, or to force clergy to their answers in secular courts, or to interfere with tithes, or do any of those things to which you pretend in the name of custom. Remember your coronation oath. Restore my property; allow me to return to Canterbury; and I will obey you as far as the honour of God and the Holy

This letter appears to have been placed in Henry's hands immediately before he met the Norman bishops. On entering the conference he was ill with agitation. Persons present said that he was in tears. He told the bishops that Becket was aiming at his destruction, soul and body. He said they were no better than traitors for not protecting him more effectually from the violence of a single man.[2] The Archbishop of Rouen exclaimed against the word 'traitors'; but it was no time for niceties of expression. War with France was on the point of breaking out, and Becket, it was now plain, meant to give it the character of a sacred war by excommunicating Henry. Easter was past: he was free to act, and clearly enough he meant to act. The Bishop of Lisieux advised an instant appeal to the pope, which would keep Becket's hands tied for the moment. He and another bishop rushed off to Pontigny to serve the notice on him. They arrived too late.

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[1] Becket to the King, May 1166 (abridged).

[2] 'Tandem dixit quod omnes proditores erant, qui eum adhibitâ operâ et diligentiâ ab unius hominis infestatione nolebant impedire.'



Before launching his thunderbolts Becket had gone to Soissons, there to prepare for the operation.

At Soissons were to be found in special presence the Blessed Virgin and St. Gregory, whose assistance the archbishop considered would be peculiarly valuable to him; and not they only, but another saint, Beatus Drausius, the patron of pugilists and duellists, who promised victory to intending combatants on their passing a night at his shrine.[1]

Becket gave St. Drausius three nights—or perhaps one to each saint—and thus fortified he betook himself to Vezelay, where at Whitsuntide vast numbers of people assembled from all parts of France. There from the pulpit after sermon on Whitsunday, with the appropriate ceremonies of bells and lighted candles quenched, he took vengeance at last upon his enemies. He suspended the Bishop of Salisbury. He cursed John of Oxford and the Archdeacon of Ilchester, two leading church-

[1] 'Archiepiscopus noster in procinctu ferendæ sententiæ constitutus iter arripuerat ad urbem Suessionum orationis causâ, ut Beatæ Virgini, cujus ibi memoria celebris est, et Beato Drausio, ad quem confugiunt pugnaturi, et Beato Gregorio Anglicanæ Ecclesiæ fundatori, qui in eâdem urbe requiescit, agonem suum precibus commendaret. Est autem Beatus Drausius gloriosissimus confessor qui, sicut Franci et Lotharingi credunt, pugiles qui ad memoriam ejus pernoctant reddit invictos.'—John of Salisbury to the Bishop of Exeter. *Letters*, vol. i. p. 227.

men of the king's party. He cursed Justiciary de Luci, who had directed the sequestration of his see, and was the author and adviser of the Constitutions of Clarendon. He cursed Ranulf de Broc and every person employed in administering his estates. Finally he cursed every one who maintained the Constitutions, and he released the bishops from their promise to observe them. A remnant of prudence or a report of the king's illness led him partially to withhold his hand. He did not actually curse Henry, but he threatened that he shortly would curse him unless he repented.

In high delight with himself the archbishop issued a pastoral to the bishops of England telling them what he had done, talking in his usual high style of the rights of priests over kings and princes, and ordering them at their soul's peril to see that the sentence was obeyed. He wrote at the same time to the pope, enclosing the terms of the excommunication, his condemnation of the Constitutions, and the threats which he had addressed to the king. These threats he declared his intention of carrying into effect unless the king showed speedy signs of submission, and he required Alexander, in a tone of imperious consequence, to confirm what he had done.

On the arrival of the censures in England the bishops met in London and determined on a further appeal to the pope. They addressed a unanimous and remarkable remonstrance to him, going into the origin of the quarrel, insisting on the abominable conduct of many of the clergy, the necessity of reform, and the moderation which the king had shown.[1] The Constitutions which he had adopted they declared to have been taken from the established customs of the realm. If they appeared objectionable, his Holiness need but point to the articles of which he disapproved, and they should be immediately altered. The archbishop's uncalled-for violence had been the sole obstacle to an arrangement.

With this letter and others from the king an embassy was despatched to Rome, John of Oxford, whom Becket had personally excommunicated, being significantly one of its members.

Pending the result of the appeal, the English bishops addressed a protest to Becket himself. They reminded him of his personal obligations to the king, and of the dangers which he was provoking. The

[1] 'Qui cum pacem regni sui enormi insolentium quorundam clericorum excessu non mediocriter turbari cognosceret, clero debitam exhibens reverentiam eorundem excessus ad ecclesiae judices retulit episcopos, ut gladius gladio subveniat.'—*Ad Alexandrum Pontificem.* Hoveden, vol. i. p. 266.

king, they said, had listened coldly hitherto to the advances of Germany. But these good dispositions might not last for ever. For the archbishop to scatter curses without allowing the persons denounced an opportunity of answering for themselves was against reason and precedent; and they had placed themselves under the protection of his Holiness.

Becket was not to be frightened by threats of German alliance. He knew better. He lectured the bishops for their want of understanding. He rebuked them for their cowardice and want of faith. The Bishop of London had recalled to him unpleasant passages in his own past history. The tone of Foliot, as well as his person, drove Becket wild. He spoke of the Bishop of London as an Ahitophel and a Doeg.

Your letter (he replied to him) is like a scorpion with a sting in its tail. You profess obedience to me, and to avoid obedience you appeal to the pope. Little will you gain by it. You have no feeling for me, or for the Church, or for the king, whose soul is perishing. You blame me for threatening him. What father will see his son go astray and hesitate to restrain that son? Who will not use the rod that he may spare the sword? The ship is in the storm: I am at the helm, and you bid me sleep. To him who speaks thus to me I reply, 'Get thee behind me, Satan!' The king, you say, desires to do what is right. My clergy are banished, my possessions are taken from me, the sword hangs over my

neck. Do you call this right? Tell the king that the Lord of men and angels has established two powers, princes and priests—the first earthly, the second spiritual; the first to obey, the second to command. He who breaks this order breaks the ordinance of God. Tell him it is no dishonour to him to submit to those to whom God himself defers, calling them gods in the sacred writings. For thus he speaks: 'I have said ye are gods;' and again, 'I will make thee a god unto Pharaoh;' 'Thou shalt take nothing from the gods' (*i. e.* the priests).[1] . . . The king may not judge his judges; the lips of the priest shall keep wisdom. It is written, 'Thou shalt require the law at his mouth, for he is the angel of God.'

The Catholic Church would have had but a brief career in this world if the rulers of it had been so wild of mind as this astonishing martyr of Canterbury. The air-bubble when blown the fullest and shining the brightest is nearest to collapsing into a drop of dirty water. John of Salisbury, sympathizing with him and admiring him as he generally did, saw clearly that the pope could never sanction so preposterous an attitude. 'I have little trust in the Church of Rome,' he said. 'I know the ways of it and the needs of it too well. So greedy, so dishonest

[1] 'Non indignetur itaque dominus noster deferre illis quibus omnium Summus deferre non dedignatur, deos appellans eos sæpius in sacris literis. Sic enim dicit, "Ego dixi, Dii estis," &c.; et iterum, "Constitui te deum Pharaonis," "Et diis non detrahes," *i. e.* sacerdotibus, &c.'—Becket to Foliot. Hoveden, vol. i. p. 261.

are the Romans, that they use too often the license of power, and take dispensations to grant what they say is useful to the commonwealth, however fatal it may be to religion.'[1]

The first practical effect of the excommunication was the recoil of the blow upon the archbishop's entertainers. In the shelter of a Cistercian abbey in France, an English subject was committing treason and levying war against his sovereign and his country. A chapter of the Cistercian Order was held in September. King Henry sent a message to the general, that, if his abbot continued to protect Becket, the Cistercians in England would be suppressed, and their property confiscated. The startled general did not dare to resist; a message was sent to Pontigny; in the fluttered dovecote it was resolved that Becket must go, and it was a cruel moment to him. A fresh asylum was provided for him at Sens. But he had grown accustomed to Pontigny, and had led a pleasant life there. On his first arrival he had attempted asceticisms, but his health had suffered,

[1] 'Nec de ecclesiâ Romanâ, cujus mores et necessitates nobis innotuerunt, multum confido. Tot et tantæ sunt necessitates, tanta aviditas et improbitas Romanorum, ut interdum utatur licentiâ potestatis, procuretque ex dispensatione quod reipublicæ dicitur expedire, etsi non expediat religioni.'—To Becket. *Letters*, 1166.

and his severities had been relaxed. He was out of spirits at his departure. His tears were flowing. The abbot cheered him up, laughed at his dejection, and told him there was nothing in his fate so particularly terrible. Becket said that he had dreamt the night before that he was to be martyred. 'Martyrdom!' laughed the abbot; 'what has a man who eats and drinks like you to do with martyrdom? The cup of wine which you drink has small affinity with the cup of martyrdom.' 'I confess,' said Becket, 'that I indulge in pleasures of the flesh. Yet the good God has deigned to reveal my fate to me.'[1]

Sad at heart, the archbishop removed to Sens; yet if the pope stood firm, all might yet be well.

VII.

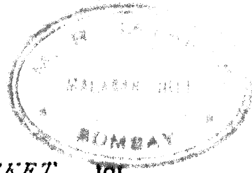
THE archbishop's letters show conclusively that the Constitutions were not the real causes of the dispute with the king. The king was willing to leave the

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[1] '"Ergo martyrio interibis? Quid esculento et temulento et martyri?

Non bene conveniunt, nec in unâ sede morantur,
calix vini quod potas et calix martyrii."

"Fateor," inquit, "corporeis voluptatibus indulgeo. Bonus tamen Dominus, qui justificat impium, indigno dignatus est revelare mysterium."'—*Materials*, vol. i. p. 51.



Constitutions to be modified by the pope. The archbishop's contest, lying concealed in his favourite phrases, 'saving my order,' 'saving the honour of God,' was for the supremacy of the Church over the Crown; for the degradation of the civil power into the position of delegate of the pope and bishops. All authority was derived from God. The clergy were the direct ministers of God. Therefore all authority was derived from God through them. However well the assumption might appear in theory, it would not work in practice, and John of Salisbury was right in concluding that the pope would never support an assumption which, broadly stated and really acted on, would shake the fabric of the Church throughout Europe. Alexander was dreaming of peace when the news reached him of the excommunications at Vezelay. The news that Richard de Luci had hanged 500 felonious clerks in England would have caused him less annoyance. Henry's envoys brought with them the bishops' appeal, and renewed the demand for cardinal legates to be sent to end the quarrel. This time the pope decided that the legates should go, carrying with them powers to take off Becket's censures. He prohibited Becket himself from pursuing his threats further till the cardinals' arrival. To Henry he

sent a private letter—which, however, he permitted him to show if circumstances made it necessary—declaring beforehand that any sentences which the archbishop might issue against himself or his subjects should be void.[1]

The humiliation was terrible; Becket's victims were free, and even rewarded. John of Oxford came back from Rome with the deanery of Salisbury. Worst of all, the cardinals were coming, and those the most dreaded of the whole body, Cardinal Otho and Cardinal William of Pavia. One of them, said John of Salisbury, was light and uncertain, the other crafty and false, and both made up of avarice. These were the ministers of the Holy See, for whose pretensions Becket was fighting. This was his estimate of them when they were to try his own cause. His letters at this moment were filled with despair. 'Ridicule has fallen on me,' he said, 'and shame on the pope. I am to be obeyed no longer. I am betrayed and given to destruction. My deposition is a settled thing. Of this, at least, let the pope assure himself: never will I accept the Cardinal of Pavia for my judge. When they are rid of me, I hear he is to be my successor at Canterbury.'[2]

[1] The Pope to Henry, December 20, 1166.
[2] Becket's *Letters*, Giles, vol. ii. p. 60.

Becket, however, was not the man to leave the field while life was in him. There was still hope, for war had broken out at last, and Henry and Lewis were killing and burning each other's territories. If not the instigator, Becket was the occasion, and Lewis, for his own interests, would still be forced to stand by him. The archbishop had what is called 'a real belief' in his cause; he was convinced that it was God's cause. Hitherto God had allowed him to fail on account of his own deficiencies, and the deficiencies required to be amended. Like certain persons who cut themselves with knives and lancets, he determined now to mortify his flesh in earnest. When settled in his new life at Sens, he rose at daybreak, prayed in his oratory, said mass, and prayed and wept again. Five times each day and night his chaplain flogged him. His food was bread and water, his bed the floor. A hair shirt was not enough without hair drawers which reached his knees, and both were worn till they swarmed with vermin.[1] The cardinals

[1] Myths gathered about the state of these garments. One day, we are told, he was dining with the Queen of France. She observed that his sleeves were fastened unusually tightly at the wrist, and that something moved inside them. He tried to evade her curiosity, for the moving things were maggots. But she pressed her questions till he was obliged to loosen the strings. Pearls of choicest size and colour rolled upon the table. The queen wished to keep one, but it could not be. The pearls were restored

approached, and the prospect grew hourly blacker. The pope rebuked Lewis for the war. The opportunity of the cardinals' presence was to be used for restoration of peace. Poor as Becket was, he could not approach these holy beings on their accessible side. 'The Cardinal of Pavia,' said John of Salisbury, 'thinks only of the king's money, and has no fear of God in him. Cardinal Otho is better: *Romanus tamen et cardinalis* (but he is a Roman and a cardinal). If we submit our cause to them, we lose it to a certainty. If we refuse we offend the king of France.' The Cardinal of Pavia wrote to announce to Becket his arrival in France and the purpose of his mission. Becket replied with a violent letter, of which he sent a copy to John of Salisbury, but despatched it before his friend could stop him. John of Salisbury thought the archbishop had lost his senses. 'Compare the cardinal's letter and your answer to it,' he said. 'What had the cardinal done that you should tell him he was giving you poison? You have no right to insult a cardinal and the pope's legate on his first communication with you. Were he to send your letter to Rome, you might be charged with

to the sleeve, and became maggots as before. *Materials*, vol. ii. p. 296.

contumacy. He tells you he is come to close the dispute to the honour of God and the Church. What harm is there in this? He is not to blame because he cautions you not to provoke the king further. Your best friends have often given you the same advice.'

With great difficulty Becket was brought to consent to see the cardinals. They came to him at Sens, but stayed for a short time only, and went on to the king in Normandy. The archbishop gathered no comfort from his speech with them. He took to his bell and candles again, and cursed the Bishop of London. He still intended to curse the king and declare an interdict. He wrote to a friend, Cardinal Hyacinth, at Rome, to say that he would never submit to the arbitration of the cardinal legates, and bidding him urge the pope to confirm the sentences which he was about to pronounce.[1] He implored the pope himself to recall the cardinals and unsheath the sword of Peter. To his entire confusion, he learned that the king had a letter from the pope declaring that his curses would be so much wasted breath.

The pope tried to soothe him. Soft words cost Alexander nothing, and, while protecting Henry

[1] Giles, vol. ii. p. 86.

from spiritual thunders, he assured the archbishop himself that his power should not be taken from him. Nor, indeed, had the violence of Becket's agitation any real occasion. Alexander wished to frighten him into submission, but had no intention of compromising himself by an authoritative decision. Many months passed away, and Becket still refused to plead before the cardinals. At length they let out that their powers extended no further than advice, and Becket, thus satisfied, consented to an official conference. The meeting was held near Gisors, on the frontiers of France and Normandy, on the the 18th of November, 1167. The archbishop came attended by his exiled English friends. With the cardinals were a large body of Norman bishops and abbots. The cardinals, earnest for peace if they could bring their refractory patient to consent to it, laid before him the general unfitness of the quarrel. They accused him of ingratitude, of want of loyalty to his sovereign, and, among other things, of having instigated the war.[1]

The last charge the archbishop sharply denied, and Lewis afterwards acquitted him also. For the rest he said that the king had begun by attacking

[1] 'Imponens ei inter cætera quod excitaverat guerram regis Francorum.'—*Materials*, vol. i. p. 66.

the Church. He was willing to consent to any reasonable terms of arrangement, with security for God's honour, proper respect for himself, and the restoration of his estates. They asked if he would recognize the Constitutions; he said that no such engagement had been required of his predecessors, and ought not to be required of him. 'The book of abominations,' as he called the Constitutions, was produced and read, and he challenged the cardinals to affirm that Christian men should obey such laws.

Henry was prepared to accept the smallest concession; nothing need be said about the Constitutions if Becket would go back to Canterbury, resume his duties, and give a general promise to be quiet. The archbishop answered that there was a proverb in England that silence gave consent. The question had been raised, and could not now be passed over. The cardinals asked if he would accept their judgment on the whole cause. He said that he would go into court before them or before any one whom the pope might appoint, as soon as his property was restored to him. In his present poverty he could not encounter the expense of a lawsuit.

Curious satire on Becket's whole contention, none the less so that he was himself unconscious of the absurdity! He withdrew from the conference,

believing that he had gained a victory, and he again began to meditate drawing his spiritual sword. Messengers on all sides once more flew off to Rome, from the king and English bishops, from the cardinals, from Becket himself. The king and bishops placed themselves under the pope's protection should the archbishop begin his curses. The Constitutions were once more placed at the pope's discretion to modify at his pleasure. The cardinals wrote charging Becket with being the sole cause of the continuance of the quarrel, and in spite of his denials persisting in accusing him of having caused the war. Becket prayed again for the cardinals' recall, and for the pope's sanction of more vigorous action.

He had not yet done with the cardinals; they knew him, and they knew his restless humour. Pending fresh resolutions from Rome, they suspended him, and left him incapable either of excommunicating or exercising any other function of spiritual authority. Once more he was plunged into despair.

'Through those legates,' he cried in his anguish to the pope, 'we are made a derision to those about us. My lord, have pity on me. You are my refuge. I can scarcely breathe for sorrow. My harp is

turned to mourning, and my joy to sadness. The last error is worse than the first.'

The pope seemed deaf to his lamentations. The suspension was not removed. Plans were formed for his translation from Canterbury to some other preferment. He said that he would rather be killed. The pope wrote so graciously to Henry that the king said he for the first time felt that he was sovereign in his own realm. John of Salisbury's mournful conviction was that the game was at last played out. 'We know those Romans,' he sighed, '*qui munere potentior est, potentior est jure.* The antipope could not have done more for the king than they have done. It will be written in the annals of the Holy See that the herald of truth, the champion of liberty, the preacher of the law of the Lord, has been deprived and treated as a criminal at the threats of an English prince.'

It is hard to say what influence again turned the scale. Perhaps Alexander was encouraged by the failures of Barbarossa in Italy. Henry had been too triumphant; he had irritated the pope and cardinals by producing their letters, and speaking too frankly of the influences by which the holy men had been bound to his side.[1] In accepting Henry's money

[1] John of Salisbury, *Letters*, vol. ii. p. 144.

they had not bargained for exposure. They were ashamed and sore, and Becket grew again into favour. The pope at the end of 1168 gave him back his powers, permitting him to excommunicate even Henry himself unless he repented before the ensuing Easter. The legates were recalled as Becket desired. Cardinal Otho recommended the king to make his peace on the best terms which he could get. John of Salisbury, less confident, but with amused contempt of the chameleonlike Alexander, advised Henry, through the Bishop of Poitiers, to treat with the archbishop immediately, *nec mediante Romano episcopo, nec rege Franciæ nec operâ cardinalium*, without help either of pope, of French king, or cardinals. Since Becket could not be frightened, Alexander was perhaps trying what could be done with Henry; but he was eager as any one for an end of some kind to a business which was now adding disgrace and scandal to its other mischiefs. Peace was arranged at last between Lewis and Henry. The English king yielded a point of dignity for which he had long contended. The day after Epiphany, January 7, 1169, the two princes met at Montmirail, between Chartres and Le Mans, attended by their peers and prelates.

In the general pacification the central disturber

was, if possible, to be included. The pope had sent commissioners, to advise and, if possible, to guide Becket into wiser courses. The political ceremonies were accomplished, Lewis and Henry were reconciled amidst general satisfaction and enthusiasm. Becket was then introduced, led in by the Archbishop of Sens, the son of the aged Theobald, Count of Blois. Henry and he had not met since the Northampton council. He threw himself in apparent humility at the king's feet. 'My lord,' he said, 'I ask you to forgive me. I place myself in God's hands and in yours.'[1] At a preliminary meeting the pope's envoys and the French clergy had urged him to submit without conditions. He had insisted on his usual reservation, but they had objected to saving clauses. The archbishop seemed now inclined really to yield, so Herbert de Bosham says, and Herbert whispered to him to stand firm.

'My lord king,' said Henry, after Becket had made his general submission, 'and you my lords and prelates, what I require of the archbishop is no more than that he will observe the laws which have been observed by his predecessors. I ask him now to give me that promise.' Becket no longer answered with

[1] 'Miserere mei, domine, quia pono me in Deo et vobis ad honorem Dei et vestrûm.'

a reservation of his order: he changed the phrase. He promised obedience, saving the honour of God.

'You wish,' replied Henry, powerfully disappointed and displeased, 'to be king in my place. This man,' he continued, turning to Lewis, 'deserted his Church of his own will, and he tells you and all men that his cause is the cause of the Church. He has governed his Church with as much freedom as those who have gone before him, but now he stands on God's honour to oppose me wherever he pleases, as if I cared for God's honour less than he. I make this proposal. Many kings have ruled in England before me, some less, some greater than I am; many holy men have been Archbishops of Canterbury before him. Let him behave to me as the most sainted of his predecessors behaved to the least worthy of mine, and I am content.'

The king's demand seemed just and moderate to all present.[1] The archbishop hesitated. Lewis asked him if he aspired to be greater than acknowledged saints. His predecessors, he said, had extirpated some abuses, but not all. There was work which remained to be done. He was stopped by a general outcry that the king had yielded enough;

[1] 'Rem justam et modestam visus est omnibus postulare.'

the saving clause must be dropped. At once, at the tone of command, Becket's spirit rose. Priests and bishops, he answered defiantly, were not to submit to men of this world save with reservations; he for one would not do it.

The meeting broke up without result. A French noble said that the archbishop was abusing their hospitality, and did not deserve further protection. Henry mounted his horse and rode sadly away. The pope's agents followed him, wringing their hands and begging for some slight additional concession. The king told them that they must address themselves to the archbishop. Let the archbishop bind himself to obey the laws. If the laws were amiss, they should be modified by the pope's wishes. In no country in the world, he said, had the clergy so much liberty as in England, and in no country were there greater villains among them. For the sake of peace he did not insist on terms precisely defined. The archbishop was required to do nothing beyond what had been done by Anselm.

Becket, however, was again immovable as stone. Lewis, after a brief coldness, took him back into favour. His power of cursing had been restored to him. The doubt was only whether the pope had recalled the safeguards which he had given to the

king. The pope's agents, on the failure of the conference, gave Henry a second letter in which Alexander told him that, unless peace was made, he could not restrain the archbishop longer. Again representatives of the various parties hurried off to Rome, Becket insisting that if the pope would only be firm the king would yield, Henry embarrassing the pope more completely than threats of schism could have done by placing the Constitutions unreservedly in his hands, and binding himself to adopt any change which the pope might suggest. Becket, feverish and impatient, would not wait for the pope's decision, and preferred to force his hand by action. He summoned the Bishops of London and Salisbury to appear before him. They appealed to Rome, but their appeal was disregarded. Appeals, as Becket characteristically said, were not allowed in order to shield the guilty, but to protect the innocent. On Palm Sunday, at Clairvaux, he took once more to his bell and candles. He excommunicated the two bishops and every one who had been concerned with his property—the Earl of Norfolk, Sir Ranulf de Broc, whom he peculiarly hated, Robert de Broc, and various other persons. The chief justiciary he threatened. The king he still left unmentioned for fear of provoking the pope too far.

Harassed on both sides, knowing perfectly well on which side good sense and justice lay, yet not daring to declare Becket wrong, and accept what, after all that had passed, would be construed into a defeat of the Church, the unfortunate Alexander drifted on as he best could, writing letters in one sense one day, and contradicting them the next. On the surface he seemed hopelessly false; but the falsehood was no more than weakness, a specious anxiety to please the king without offending the archbishop, and a hope that time and weariness would bring about an end. There is no occasion to follow the details of his duplicities. Two legates were again sent—not cardinals this time, but ecclesiastical lawyers, Gratian and Vivian—bound by oath to cause no scandal by accepting bribes. As usual, the choice was impartial; Gratian was for Becket, Vivian for the king. So long as his excommunications were allowed to stand, Becket cared little who might come. He added the chief justiciary to the list of the accursed as he had threatened to do. He wrote to the Bishop of Ostia that the king's disposition could only be amended by punishment. The serpent head of the iniquity must now be bruised, and he bade the bishop impress the necessity of it upon the pope. Gratian was taken into Becket's

confidence. Vivian he treated coldly and contemptuously. According to Herbert and Becket's friends, Gratian reported that the king was shifty and false, and that his object was to betray the Church and the archbishop. Henry himself declared that he assented to all that they proposed to him, and Diceto says that the legates were on the point of giving judgment in Henry's favour when the Archbishop of Sens interposed and forbade them. In the confusion of statement the actions of either party alone can be usefully attended to, and behind the acts of all, or at least of the pope, there was the usual ambiguity. Alexander threatened the king; he again empowered Becket to use whatever power he possessed to bring the king to submission, and he promised to confirm his sentences.[1] But as certainly he had secret conferences at Rome with Henry's envoys, and promised, on the other hand, that the archbishop should not be allowed to hurt him. Becket, furious and uncontrollable, called the Bishop of London a parricide, an infidel, a Goliath, a son of Belial; he charged the Bishop of Hereford to see that the sentence against Foliot and his brother of Salisbury should be observed in England. Henry,

[1] 'Quod ea quæ statuerit non mutabuntur.'

in reply, assured Foliot of protection, and sent him to Rome with letters from himself to pursue his appeal and receive absolution from the pope himself. The Count of Flanders interposed, the Count of Mayence interposed, but without effect. At length, on the 18th of November, the anniversary of the conference with the cardinals at Gisors, Henry and Lewis met again at Montmartre outside Paris, Becket and his friends being in attendance in an adjoining chapel. Gratian had returned to Rome. Vivian was present, and pressed Lewis to bring the archbishop to reason. Lewis really exerted himself, and not entirely unsuccessfully. Henry was even more moderate than before. The Constitutions, by the confession of Becket's biographer, Herbert, who was with him on the spot, were practically abandoned.[1] Henry's only condition was that the archbishop should not usurp the functions of the civil power; he, on his part, undertaking not to strain the prerogative. Becket dropped his saving clause, and consented to make the promise required of him, if the king would restore his estates, and give him compensation for

[1] 'Consuetudines omnes malæ, non expressim tamen, sed ita in genere videlicet quibus ancillaretur ecclesia a rege sunt abdicatæ, et libertates ad ecclesiæ honorem et cleri decor a rege benigne (ut videbatur) susceptæ.'—Herbert. *Materials*, vol. iii. p. 447.

the arrear rents, which he estimated at £20,000. Lewis said that money ought not to be an obstacle to peace. It was unworthy of the archbishop to raise so poor a difficulty. But here, too, Henry gave way. He promised that an impartial estimate should be made, and Becket was to be repaid.

But now, no more than before, had the archbishop any real intention of submitting. His only fear was of offending Lewis. The Archbishop of Sens had gone to Rome to persuade the pope to give him legatine powers over Henry's French dominions. The censures of the Church might be resisted in England; but if Normandy, Anjou, and Aquitaine were laid under interdict, the two spiritual conspirators had concluded that the king would be forced to surrender at discretion. Becket was daily expecting a favourable answer, and meanwhile was protracting the time. He demanded guarantees. He did not suspect the king, he said, but he suspected his courtiers. John of Salisbury had cautioned him, and the pope had cautioned him, against so indecent a requisition. Lewis said it was unreasonable. Becket said then that he must have the kiss of peace as a sign that the king was really reconciled to him. He probably knew that the kiss would and must be withheld from him until he had given

proofs that he meant in earnest to carry out his engagements. The king said coldly that he did not mean, and had never meant, to injure the Church. He was willing to leave the whole question between himself and the archbishop either to the peers and prelates of France or to the French universities. More he could not do. The conference at Montmartre ended, as Becket meant that it should end, in nothing.

He sent off despatches to the Archbishop of Sens and to his Roman agents, entirely well satisfied with himself, and bidding them tell the pope that Normandy had only to be laid under interdict, and that the field was won. Once more he had painfully to discover that he had been building on a quicksand. Instead of the interdict, the pope sent orders to the Archbishop of Rouen and the Bishop of Nevers to absolve a second time the victims whom he had excommunicated at Clairvaux. Instead of encouragement to go on and smite the king with the spiritual sword, he received a distinct command to abstain for another interval. Last of all, and worst of all, the pope informed him that at the king's request, for certain important purposes, he had granted a commission, as legate over all England, to his rival and enemy the Archbishop of York. The king's envoys

had promised that the commission should not be handed to the Archbishop of York till the pope had been again consulted. But the deed was done. The letter had been signed and delivered.[1] The hair shirt and the five daily floggings had been in vain then! Heaven was still inexorable, The archbishop raved like a madman. 'Satan was set free for the destruction of the Church.' 'At Rome it was always the same. Barabbas was let go, and Christ was crucified.' 'Come what might, he would never submit, but he would trouble the Roman Church no more.'[2]

VIII.

Becket had now been for more than five years in exile. He had fought for victory with a tenacity which would have done him credit had his cause been less preposterous. At length it seemed that hope was finally gone. At the supreme moment another opportunity was thrust into his hands. Henry's health was uncertain; he had once been dangerously ill. The succession to the English

[1] Matthew Paris, *Chronica Majora*, pp. 249, 250.
[2] Becket to Cardinal Albert. Giles, vol. ii. p. 251.

Crown had not yet settled into fixed routine. Of the Conqueror's sons William had been preferred to Robert. Stephen supplanted Matilda; but Matilda's son succeeded Stephen. To prevent disputes it had been long decided that Prince Henry must be crowned and receive the homage of the barons while his father was still living.

The pope had been invited to perform the ceremony in person. The pope had found it impossible to go, and among the other inconveniences resulting from Becket's absence the indefinite postponement of this coronation had not been the lightest. The king had been reluctant to invade the acknowledged privilege of the Archbishop of Canterbury, and had put it off from year to year. But the country was growing impatient. The archbishop's exile might now be indefinitely protracted. The delay was dangerous, and the object of the commission for which the king had asked, and which the pope had granted to the Archbishop of York, was to enable the Archbishop of York to act in the coronation ceremony. The commission in its terms was all that Henry could desire; the pope not only permitted the Archbishop of York to officiate, but enjoined him to do it. Promises were said to have been given that it was not to be used without the

pope's consent; but in such a labyrinth of lies little reliance can be placed on statements unconfirmed by writing. The pope did not pretend that he had exacted from the English envoys any written engagement. He had himself signed a paper giving the Archbishop of York the necessary powers, and this paper was in the king's hands.[1] The coronation was the symbol of the struggle in which Becket was now engaged. The sovereign, according to his theory, was the delegate of the Church. In receiving the crown from the hands of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the sovereign formally admitted his dependent position; and so long as it could be maintained that the coronation would not hold unless it was performed either by the Archbishop of Canterbury or by the pope himself, the sovereign's subject state was a practical reality.

Becket saw the favourable moment, and instantly snatched at it. He had many powerful friends in England among the peers and knights. The lay peers, he says in his letters, had always been truer to him than the clergy, they on their part having their own differences with the Crown. He had

[1] Giles, vol. ii. pp. 257-8. The commission quoted by Giles is evidently the same as that to which the pope referred in his letter to Becket.

ascertained that the coronation could not be postponed; and if he could make the validity of it to depend on his own presence, he might redeem his past mortifications, and bring Henry to his feet after all. He knew Alexander's nature, and set his agents to work upon him. He told them to say that if the coronation was accomplished without his own presence the power of the Roman see in England was gone; and thus, when all seemed lost, he gained the feeble and uncertain pope to his side once more. In keeping with his conduct throughout the whole Becket difficulty Alexander did not revoke his previous letter. He left it standing as something to appeal to, as an evidence of his goodwill to Henry. But he issued another injunction to the Archbishop of York, forbidding him to officiate; and he enclosed the injunction to Becket to be used by him in whatever manner he might think fit. The Archbishop of York never received this letter. It was given to the Bishop of Worcester, who was in Normandy, and was on the point of returning to England. The Bishop of Worcester was detained, and it did not reach its destination. So runs the story; but the parts will not fit one another, and there is a mystery left unexplained.[1] This only is certain, that the

[1] It would appear from a letter of John of Salisbury that the

inhibition was not served on the Archbishop of York. Rumour may have reached England that such a thing had been issued; but the commission which had been formally granted remained legally unrevoked, and on June 18 Prince Henry was crowned at Westminster in his father's presence by the Archbishop of York and the Bishops of London, Durham, Rochester, and Salisbury.

It was easy now for Becket to represent to Alexander that the English bishops had rewarded his kindness to them by defying his positive injunctions. To the superstitious English barons the existence of the inhibition threw a doubt on the legality of the coronation, and as men's minds then were, and with the wild lawless disposition of such lion cubs as the Plantagenet princes, a tainted title would too surely mean civil war. By ill-fortune

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prohibitory letter had been purposely withheld by Becket, who was allowing himself to be guided by some idle *vaticinia* or prophecies. John of Salisbury writes to him (*Letters*, vol. ii. p. 236): 'Memineritis quantum periculum et infortunium ad se traxerit mora porrigendi . . . prohibitorias Eboracensi archiepiscopo et episcopis transmarinis. . . . Subtilitatem vestram vaticinia quæ non erant a Spiritu deluserunt. . . . Vaticiniis ergo renunciemus in posterum, quia nos in hâc parte gravius infortunia perculerunt.' Herbert, however, says that some of the bishops who were engaged in the coronation had received the inhibition; others, having had warning, refused to touch or open the pope's letters.

offence was given at the same time to Lewis, who considered that his daughter should have been crowned with her husband, and he resented what he chose to regard as a wilful slight. The pope was told that the coronation oath had been altered, that the liberties of the Church had been omitted, and that the young king had been sworn to maintain the Constitutions of Clarendon. Becket made the most of his opportunity; mistakes, exaggerations, wilful lies, and culpable credulity, did their work effectively; Lewis went to war again, and invaded Normandy; the pope, believing that he had been tricked and insulted, commanded Henry to make peace with the archbishop under threat of instant personal excommunication of himself and an interdict over his whole dominions. Henry flew back from England to Normandy. In a month he dispelled the illusions of Lewis, and restored peace. It was less easy to calm Alexander, who regarded himself, if not openly defied, yet as betrayed by the breach of the promise that the commission to the Archbishop of York should not be used without a fresh permission from himself. Henry knew that a sentence of excommunication against himself, and an interdict over his French dominions, was seriously possible. The risk was too great to be incurred without another effort

to compose the weary quarrel. The archbishop, too, on his side had been taught by often repeated experience that the pope was a broken reed. Many times the battle seemed to have been won, and the pope's weakness or ill-will had snatched the victory from him. He had left England because he thought the continent a more promising field of battle for him. He began to think that final success, if he was ever to obtain it, would only be possible to him in his own see, among his own people, surrounded by his powerful friends. He, too, on his side, was ready for a form of agreement which would allow him to return and repossess himself of the large revenues of which he had felt the want so terribly. More than once he and Henry met and separated without a conclusion. At length at Frêteval in Vendôme, on St. Mary Magdalen's day, July 22, an interview took place in the presence of Lewis and a vast assemblage of prelates and knights and nobles; where, on the terms which had been arranged at Montmartre, the king and the archbishop consented to be reconciled The kiss which before had been the difficulty was not offered by Henry and was not demanded by Becket; but according to the account given by Herbert, who describes what he himself witnessed, and relates what Becket told him, after the main

points were settled, the king and the archbishop rode apart out of hearing of every one but themselves. There the archbishop asked the king whether he might censure the bishops who had officiated at the coronation. The king, so the archbishop informed his friends, gave his full and free consent. The archbishop sprang from his horse in gratitude to the king's feet. The king alighted as hastily, and held the archbishop's stirrup as he remounted. These gestures the spectators saw and wondered at, unable, as Herbert says, to conjecture what was passing till it was afterwards explained to them.

That the king should have consented as absolutely and unconditionally as Becket said that he did, or even that he should have consented at all in Becket's sense of the word, to the excommunication of persons who had acted by his own orders and under a supposed authority from the pope, is so unlikely in itself, and so inconsistent with Henry's conduct afterwards, that we may feel assured that Henry's account of what took place would, if we knew it, have been singularly different. But we are met with a further difficulty. Herbert says positively that the conversation between Becket and the king was private between themselves, that no one

heard it or knew the subject of it except from Becket's report. Count Theobald of Blois asserted, in a letter to the pope, that in his presence (*me præsente*) the archbishop complained of the conduct of the English prelates, and that the king empowered him to pass sentence on them. Yet more remarkably, the archbishop afterwards at Canterbury insisted to Reginald Fitzurse that the king's permission had been given in the audience of two hundred gentlemen, and that Sir Reginald himself was among the audience. Fitzurse denied that he heard the king give any such permission. Some general words were perhaps used which Becket construed in his own way, and did not press too clearly lest they should be withdrawn or qualified; but Becket's subsequent action is inconsistent with the belief that he had the king's sanction for what he intended to do. Had he supposed that the king would approve, he would have acted openly and at once. Instead of consulting the king, he had no sooner left the Frêteval conference than he privately obtained from the pope letters of suspension against the Archbishop of York and the Bishop of Durham, and letters of excommunication against the Bishops of London, Salisbury, and Rochester; and while he permitted Henry to believe that he was going home to govern his

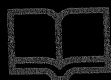
once more.

IX.

By the terms of the peace of Frêteval, the archbishop was to be restored to his estates and dignity. He on his part had given assurances of his intentions with which Henry had professed himself satisfied. Private communications had passed between him and the king, the nature of which is known only to us through the archbishop's representations to his friends. That the reconciliation, however, was left incomplete, is evident both from Becket's conduct and from Henry's. The king had made the return of his favour conditional on Becket's behaviour. Either he did not trust Becket's promises, or the promises were less ample than he desired.

Immediately after the interview the king became dangerously ill, and for a month he believed that he was dying. Becket returned to Sens, and sent

[1] Henry's words were: 'Archiepiscopus pacem mecum fecit ad voluntatem meam.'



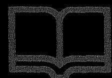
messengers to England to young Henry announcing his approaching return, and requesting that his estates should be given in charge at once to his own people. The messengers were instructed privately to communicate with his English friends, and to ascertain the state of public feeling. The young king named a day on which the trust should be made over to the archbishop's officials, and advised that the archbishop should remain for a while on the continent, and endeavour to recover his father's confidence. The messengers reported that the archbishop had many staunch supporters, the Earl of Cornwall among them; but they were unanimously of opinion that it would be unwise for him to reappear at Canterbury so long as the old king's distrust continued. The peace of Frêteval, therefore, was obviously understood to have been inconclusive by all parties. The inconclusiveness was made still more apparent immediately after.

At the beginning of September, Henry had partially recovered. The archbishop sent John of Salisbury and Herbert of Bosham to him to complain of the delay with the estates. He had been watched, perhaps, more closely than he was aware. The king knew nothing as yet of the intended excommunication of the bishops. But he knew

himself.

Passionate as usual, the archbishop complained to the pope; he intimated that only his Holiness's orders prevented him from revenging his ill-treatment. Prudence, however, told him that if he was to make an effective use of the excommunications which the pope had trusted to him, he must for the present restrain himself. Twice again he saw the king at Tours, and afterwards at Amboise. Henry was reserved, but not unkind. The archbishop had professed a wish for peace. If his behaviour after his return to England proved that he was in earnest in these professions—if he remained quietly in his province, and made no further disturbances—the king said that he was prepared to show him every possible kindness.

Henry needed no more complete justification of his suspicions than an expression which Becket used in relating this conversation to his friend Herbert. 'As the king was speaking,' he said, 'I thought of the words: "All these things will I give thee if thou wilt fall down and worship me."' It is thus evident on the face of the narrative that the king



never gave the conscious sanction to violent measures against the bishops, which Becket pretended afterwards that he had received. In answer to his complaints at Amboise, Henry may have told him that the rights of the see of Canterbury should be assured, and that, if those rights had been impaired, satisfaction should be made to him. To this last conference, and to some such words as these, the Count of Blois may have referred in his letter to the pope. But Becket and his friends put a construction upon the promises which none knew better than they that Henry did not intend. It is as certain that Becket's own professions were no less equivocal—that when he spoke of peace he was thinking only of a peace of which he was to dictate the terms, and that he had already resolved to reopen the war on a new stage on the instant of his return to his cathedral.

But the return was now determined on, be the consequences what they might. The English bishops had their friends among the cardinals. In the course of the autumn it became known in England that the archbishop had applied for censures against the bishops, and that the pope had granted them. They advised the king to insist that Becket should bind himself by some more explicit engagements

if he were in possession of such letters he should surrender them. Henry preferred to trust to the archbishop's honour, or to the watchfulness of the wardens of the ports. He was weary of the struggle. Doubtless he had his misgivings, as the bishops had; but he had made up his mind that the experiment should be tried, with, on his part at least, a faithful discharge of his own engagements.

The archbishop had gone to Rouen in November to settle accounts with creditors who had advanced him money. He had meant to see Henry once more, but Henry wrote to say that the delay of his return had led to disquieting rumours which ought not to continue. He desired the archbishop to go back to Canterbury at once; and, that he might be subjected to no inconvenience on landing, he sent John of Oxford, whose person was well known, to accompany and protect him. John of Oxford's instructions were, after seeing Becket safe at Canterbury, to go on to the young king and give orders for the immediate restoration of the property of the see.

The die was cast. The archbishop resolved to



go. There was abundant disaffection in England. In the spring of this very year, the king had been obliged to suspend the sheriffs in several counties, and ultimately to remove them, for extortion and oppression. The clergy were lukewarm in his interests; but there were better reasons for relying upon the nobles. The king had thrust a bridle in their mouths, restraining what they called their liberties, and many of these great persons, as was afterwards proved, were ready to make common cause with the Church against the Crown. The archbishop was perfectly right in expecting to find among the laity a party who would stand by him. He went once more to Sens to take leave of his entertainers. After an affectionate parting with Lewis and the Queen of France, retaining still his old taste for magnificence, he rode down to the coast with an escort of a hundred cavaliers, and there once more, separated from him but by a few hours' sail, lay the white cliffs of England.

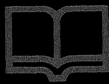
It was thought likely, if it was not known for certain, that Becket would bring with him letters from the pope, and the introduction of such letters, if to the hurt of any English subject, was against the law without a written license from the king. The duty of the wardens of the ports was to search

the persons and the baggage of any one whom there was ground for suspecting, and on reaching the coast Becket learned that the three prelates who were to be excommunicated, the Sheriff of Kent, Sir Ranulf de Broc, and Sir Reginald de Warenne, one of the council of the young king, were waiting for him at Dover to ascertain whether he was the bearer of any such explosive missile. The future martyr was not select in his language. 'Archdevils,' 'priests of Baal,' 'standard-bearers of the Balaamites,' 'children of perdition,' were the common phrases with which he described the unfortunate bishops who were thus trying to escape their sentences. To outwit their vigilance, a day or two before he meant to sail, he sent over a boy in a small vessel whose insignificant appearance would attract no attention. The boy or nun (for there is reason to suppose that the bearer was a woman disguised) presented himself suddenly before the Archbishop of York in St. Peter's Oratory at Dover, placed the letter of suspension in his hands, and disappeared before he had time to learn its contents. In the same hour, and by the same instrument, the still more terrible letters of excommunication were served on the Bishops of London and Salisbury. Their precautions had been baffled. The shots had been fired which

opened the new campaign, and the mark had been successfully hit. Sir Ranulf de Broc searched the town with a drawn sword for the audacious messenger, but the messenger had vanished.

It would have gone ill with Becket had he landed in the midst of the storm which the delivery of the letters instantly kindled. The ground of the censures was the coronation of the young king. To excommunicate the bishops who had officiated was to deny the young Henry's title to the crown. The archbishop had come back then, it seemed, to defy the government and light a civil war. The next morning, when he and his friends were examining the vessel in which they were about to embark, an English boat ran into the harbour. Some one leaped on shore, and, coming straight to Herbert, told him that if the archbishop went to Dover he was a dead man; the excommunications had set the country on fire. A rapid council was held. Several of the priests were frightened. The certain displeasure of the king was admitted with a frankness which showed how little Becket really supposed that Henry would approve what he had done. Becket asked Herbert for advice. Herbert, always the worst adviser that he could have consulted, said that they must advance or be disgraced. Let the

Much of this fine language may have been an after-thought. The archbishop, when a choice of conduct lay before him, was constitutionally likely to choose the most rash. He decided, however, to avoid Dover, and on the morning of the 1st of December he sailed up the river to Sandwich, with his cross raised conspicuously above the figure-head of his ship. Sandwich was his own town. The inhabitants were lieges of the see, and a vast and delighted crowd was gathered on the quay to receive him. The change of destination was known at Dover Castle. Sir Reginald de Warenne, the Sheriff of Kent, and Ranulf de Broc, had ridden across, and had arrived at Sandwich before the archbishop landed. John of Oxford hurried to them with the king's orders that the archbishop was to be received in peace. They advanced in consequence without their arms, and inquired the meaning of the excommunication of the bishops. To their extreme surprise, they were told that the letters had been issued with the king's knowledge and permission. To so bold an assertion no immediate answer was possible. They pointed to his



train, among whom was a French priest. Strangers coming into England without a passport were required to swear allegiance for the time of their stay. The sheriff said that the priest must take the usual oath. Becket scornfully answered that no clerk in his company should take any oath at all. He declined further conversation, and bade them come to him after two days to the palace of Canterbury if they had more to say.

Becket passed the remainder of the day at Sandwich. The next morning he set out for his cathedral. Six years he had been absent, and for all those years his name had been a household word in castle and parsonage, grange and cabin. In England people sympathize instinctively with every one who opposes the Crown, and between Sandwich and Canterbury Becket was among his own tenants, to whom he had been a gentler master than Ranulf de Broc. The brief winter day's ride was one long triumphal procession. Old men, women, and children lined the roads on their knees to beg his blessing. Clergy came at the head of their parishioners with garlands and banners. Boys chanted hymns. Slowly at a foot's pace the archbishop made his way among the delighted multitudes. It was evening before he reached Canterbury. He went direct to the cathedral.

himself on his throne, and the monks came one by one and kissed him. Tears were in all eyes. 'My lord,' Herbert whispered to him, 'it matters not now when you depart hence. Christ has conquered. Christ is now king.' 'He looked at me,' says Herbert, 'but he did not speak.'

Strangely in that distant century, where the general history is but outline, and the colours are dim, and the lights and shadows fall where modern imagination chooses to throw them, and the great men and women who figured on the world's stage are, for the most part, only names, the story of Becket, in these last days of it especially, stands out as in some indelible photograph, every minutest feature of it as distinct as if it were present to our eyes. We have the terrible drama before us in all its details. We see the actors, we hear their very words, we catch the tones of their voices, we perceive their motives; we observe them from day to day, and hour to hour; we comprehend and sympathize with the passions through the fierce collision of which the action was worked out to its catastrophe. The importance of the questions which were at issue, the characters of the chief performers, and the intense



interest with which they were watched by the spectators, raise the biographies and letters in which the story is preserved to a level of literary excellence far beyond what is to be found in all contemporary writings.

The archbishop slept in his desolate palace. No preparations had been made for him, The stores had not been laid in. The barns and byres were empty. Ranulf de Broc had swept up the last harvest, and had left the lands bare. In the morning (December 3) De Warenne and the sheriff reappeared with the chaplains of the three bishops. They had been led to hope, they said, that the archbishop would come home in peace. Instead of peace he had brought a sword. By scattering excommunications without notice, he was introducing confusion into every department of the realm. The very crown was made dependent on the archbishop's will. The law of England was reduced to the archbishop's edicts. Such an assumption could not and would not be allowed. The excommunication of the bishops was a direct blow at the authority of the young king. For the archbishop's own sake they advised him, and in the king's name they commanded him, to take the censures off, or a time might come when he would regret his violence too late to repair it.

Until the issue of the sentences against the three bishops, Alexander had not committed himself to any positive act in Becket's favour, and it had been to compromise the papacy distinctly in the quarrel that the pope's letters had been thus immediately discharged. Becket answered that the excommunications had been issued by the supreme pontiff, and that he could not undo the work of his superior. He admitted, with exasperating satire, that he was not displeased to see his Holiness defend the Church with his own hands. To punish men who had broken the law was not to show contempt of the king. He had himself complained to the king of the bishops' conduct, and the king had promised that he should have satisfaction. For the rest he acknowledged no right in the king or any man to challenge his actions. He bore the spiritual sword, and did not mean to shrink from drawing it against sinners, whatever might be the inconvenience. If the bishops would take an oath to submit to any sentence which the pope might pass upon them, he would strain a point and absolve them; without such an oath never.

The answer was carried to Dover. Foliot and the Bishop of Salisbury were willing, it is said, to have sworn as Becket prescribed. The Archbishop of York declared that he would spend the last

farthing that he possessed rather than yield to such insolence. The young king was at Winchester.[1] De Warenne hastened to him to report Becket's behaviour, and probably to ask instructions as to what the bishops should do. They crossed eventually to the old king's court in Normandy, but not till after a delay of more than a fortnight at Dover. Obviously the conduct which they were to pursue was carefully canvassed and deliberately resolved upon. Becket himself, too, found it prudent to offer explanations, and sent the Prior of Dover after De Warenne to Winchester to report the archbishop's arrival, and to ask permission for him to present himself. From the rapidity with which events now passed, the prior must have ridden night and day. Young Henry being still under age, the archbishop's messenger was received by his guardians, whom he found in towering indignation. The excommunication was regarded as an invitation to rebellion, and had Henry II. himself died in the preceding August, there undoubtedly would have been rebellion. 'Does the archbishop mean to make pagans of us, with his suspensions and curses?' they said; 'does he intend to upset the throne?' The prior asked to be allowed

[1] Not Woodstock, as is generally said. William of Canterbury, with special reference to localities, says Wintonia.

to see the young king himself. He assured them that the archbishop had meant no injury to him. No one in the realm besides his father loved the prince more dearly. The displeasure was only that other hands than those of the primate had placed the crown upon his head. He repeated the story that the old king knew what was to be done to the bishops. He trusted that the young king would not refuse to receive a person who only desired to do him loyal service.

The court was evidently perplexed by the confident assertions with respect to Henry. The Earl of Cornwall advised that Becket should be allowed to come; they could hear from himself an explanation of the mystery. Geoffrey Ridel, the Archdeacon of Salisbury, happened, however, to be present. Ridel was one of Henry II.'s most confidential advisers, whom Becket had cursed at Vezelay, and habitually spoke of as an archdevil. He had been intimately acquainted with the whole details of the quarrel from its commencement, and was able to affirm positively that things were not as Becket represented. He recommended the guardians to consult the king before the archbishop was admitted; and the Prior of Dover was, in consequence, dismissed without an answer.

The archbishop had committed himself so deeply that he could not afford to wait. His hope was to carry the country with him before the king could interfere, or at least to have formed a party too strong to be roughly dealt with. The Prior of Dover not having brought back a positive prohibition, he left Canterbury professedly to go himself to Winchester: but he chose to take London in his way. It was easy to say that he had been long absent; that his flock required his presence; that there were children to be confirmed, candidates for the priesthood to be ordained—holy rites of all kinds, too long neglected, to be attended to. There was no difficulty in finding an excuse for a circuit through the province; and the archiepiscopal visitation assumed the form of a military parade. Few as the days had been since he had set his foot on the English shore, he had contrived to gather about him a knot of laymen of high birth and station. *Quidam illustres*, certain persons of distinction, attended him with their armed retainers, and, surrounded by a steel-clad retinue with glancing morions and bristling lances, the archbishop set out for London a week after his return from the continent. Rochester lay in his way. Rochester Castle was one of the strongholds which he had challenged for his own. The gates of

the castle remained closed against him, but the townsmen received him as their liege lord. As he approached Southwark the citizens poured out to greet the illustrious Churchman who had dared to defy his sovereign. A vast procession of three thousand clergy and scholars formed on the road, and went before him chanting a *Te Deum;* and this passionate display had a deliberate and dangerous meaning which every one who took part in it understood. To the anxious eyes of the court it was a first step in treason, and in the midst of the shouts of the crowd a voice was distinguished, saying 'Archbishop, 'ware the knife!'

It was on December 13 that Becket reached London Bridge. He slept that night close by, at the palace of the old Bishop of Winchester. His movements had been watched. The next morning Sir Jocelyn of Louvain and another knight waited on him with an order from the court at Winchester to return instantly to Canterbury, and to move no more about the realm with armed men. The archbishop had not ventured so far to be frightened at the first hard word. He received Sir Jocelyn as a king might receive a rebel feudatory. With lofty fierceness he said he would go back at no man's bidding if Christmas had not been so near, when he desired to be in

his cathedral.[1] 'May I not visit my diocese?' he demanded. 'Will the king drive off the shepherd that the wolf may tear the flock? Let God see to it!' Sir Jocelyn said that he had come to deliver the king's commands, not to dispute about them. 'Carry back, then, my commands to your king,' said the archbishop.[2] 'Your commands!' the knight retorted; 'address your commands to those of your own order.' Turning sternly to the young lords in the archbishop's suite, he bade them remember their duties, and rode off with his companion.

To obey was to lose the game. Instead of obeying, the archbishop went on to Harrow, a benefice of his own, into which an incumbent had been intruded by the Crown. From Harrow he sent for the old Abbot of St. Albans, and despatched him to Winchester with a list of complaints. At the same time, and to learn the strength of the party at Court which he supposed to be ready to stand by him, he sent a monk—apparently William of Canterbury, who tells the story—on a secret and dangerous mission to the Earl of Cornwall. The monk went disguised as a

[1] Spiritu fervens respondit se nullatenus propter inhibitionem hanc regressurum, nisi quia tunc jam festus tam solemnis urgebat dies quo ecclesiæ suæ abesse noluit.'

[2] 'Si et mandata mea regi vestro renunciaturi estis.'—William of Canterbury.

physician, Becket bidding him write word how things were going. The terms in which the monk's commission was expressed are extremely remarkable. The excommunications had been construed as a blow at the young king. Becket denied this, but so the censures were taken. This pretended physician was to go *velut alter Cushy*, and Cushy was the messenger who brought word to David that the Lord had avenged him of his enemies, and that the young king Absalom was dead.[1]

The Earl of Cornwall was well disposed to Becket, but was true to his king and his country. When the rebellion actually broke out three years after, the Earl of Cornwall's loyalty saved Henry's crown. He was willing to befriend the archbishop within the limits of law, but not to the extent upon which Becket counted. He received the disguised monk into his household; he examined him closely as to the archbishop's intentions. He would, perhaps, have allowed him to remain, but a servant of the young king recognized the man through his assumed character as one of Becket's immediate followers two days after his arrival. The earl bade him begone on the instant, and tell his master to look to himself; his life was in peril.

[1] 2 Samuel xviii. 31.

The Abbot of St. Albans had travelled more slowly. The discovery was a bad preparation for his reception. Sir Jocelyn had brought back Becket's insolent answer, and the open disobedience of the order to return to Canterbury could be construed only as defiance. To the alarmed guardians it seemed as if an insurrection might break out at any moment. The abbot found the Court at Breamore, near Fordingbridge, in Hampshire. He was admitted, and he presented his schedule of wrongs, which, after all, were trifling. The archbishop's clergy were forbidden to leave the realm. He had been promised restitution of his property, but it had been given back to him in ruins. His game had been destroyed; his woods had been cut down; his benefices were detained from him. As a last outrage, since his return Sir Ranulf de Broc had seized a cargo of wine which he had brought over with the old king's permission. The vessel in which it had arrived had been scuttled, and the crew had been incarcerated. God was injured when his clergy were injured, the abbot said, and in Becket's name he demanded redress.

The abbot had spoken firmly, but in language and manner he had at least recognized that he was a subject addressing his sovereign. A priest in his

Primate, 'Let man so think of us as ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. If justice be not done as right demands, ye need not doubt that we will do our part and use the powers which God has committed to us."' The fierce menace was delivered amidst frowning groups of knights and nobles. Hot youths clenched their fists and clutched their dagger-hilts. A courtier told the bold priest that but for the honour of the king's presence he should suffer for his insolence. Sir Reginald de Warenne, who was present, said, 'The bows are bent on both sides.' The Earl of Cornwall, fresh from his conference with Becket's secret messenger, muttered, 'Ere Lent there will be wild work in England.'

X.

The story now turns to Henry's court in Normandy. Between Southampton and the Norman coast communications were easy and rapid; and the account of the arrival of the censured bishops, with the indignant words which burst from the king at

the unwelcome news which he heard from them for the first time, is an imperfect legend in which the transactions of many days must have been epitomized.

The bishops did not leave England till the 20th or 21st of December,[1] and before their appearance the king must have heard already not only of the excommunications and of the daring misuse of his own name, but of the armed progress to London, of the remarkable demonstration there, of the archbishop's defiance of the government, of the mission of the Abbot of St. Albans, of the threats of the priest, and of the imminent danger of a general rebellion. During the first three weeks of this December many an anxious council must have been held in the Norman court, and many a scheme talked over and rejected for dealing with this impracticable firebrand. What could be done with him? No remedy was now available but a violent one. The law could not restrain a man who claimed to be superior to law, and whose claims the nation was not prepared directly to deny. Three centuries later the solution would have been a formal trial, with the block and axe as the sequel of a judicial

[1] Herbert says that they arrived at Bayeux *paucis diebus ante natalem Domini*.

strength to control them. In our own day the phantom has been exorcised altogether, and an archbishop who used Becket's language would be consigned to an asylum. In Becket's own time neither of these methods was possible. Becket himself could neither be borne with, consistently with the existence of the civil government, nor resisted save at a risk of censures which even the king scarcely dared to encounter. A bishop might have committed the seven deadly sins, but his word was still a spell which could close the gates of heaven. The allegiance of the people could not be depended upon for a day if Becket chose to declare the king excommunicated, unless the pope should interfere; and the pope was an inadequate resource in a struggle for the supremacy of the Church over the State. It was not until secular governments could look popes and bishops in the face, and bid them curse till they were tired, that the relations of Church and State admitted of legal definition. Till that time should arrive the ecclesiastical theory was only made tolerable by submitting to the checks of tacit compromise and practical good sense.

Necessities for compromises of this kind exist at

all times. In the most finished constitutions powers are assigned to the different branches of the State which it would be inconvenient or impossible to remove, yet which would cause an immediate catastrophe if the theory were made the measure of practice. The Crown retains prerogatives at present which would be fatal to it if strained. Parliament would make itself intolerable if it asserted the entire privileges which it legally possesses. The clergy in the twelfth century were allowed and believed to be ministers of God in a sense in which neither Crown nor baron dared appropriate the name to themselves. None the less the clergy could not be allowed to reduce Crown and barons into entire submission to their own pleasure. If either churchman or king broke the tacit bargain of mutual moderation which enabled them to work together harmoniously, the relations between the two orders might not admit of more satisfactory theoretic adjustment; but there remained the resource to put out of the way the disturber of the peace.

Fuel ready to kindle was lying dry throughout Henry's dominions. If Becket was to be allowed to fling about excommunications at his own pleasure, to travel through the country attended by knights in arms, and surrounded by adoring fools who regarded

Henry's court knew him, the character of the man himself who was causing so much anxiety must have been peculiarly irritating. Had Becket been an Anselm, he might have been credited with a desire to promote the interests of the Church, not for power's sake, but for the sake of those spiritual and moral influences which the Catholic Church was still able to exert, at least in some happy instances. But no such high ambition was to be traced either in Becket's agitation or in Becket's own disposition. He was still the self-willed, violent chancellor, with the dress of the saint upon him, but not the nature. His cause was not the mission of the Church to purify and elevate mankind, but the privilege of the Church to control the civil government, and to dictate the law in virtue of magical powers which we now know to have been a dream and a delusion. His personal religion was not the religion of a regenerated heart, but the religion of self-torturing asceticism, a religion of the scourge and the hair shirt, a religion in which the evidences of grace were to be traced not in humbleness and truth, but in the worms and maggots which crawled about his body. He was the imper-

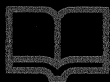


sonation not of what was highest and best in the Catholic Church, but of what was falsest and worst. The fear which he inspired was not the reverence willingly offered to a superior nature, but a superstitious terror like that felt for witches and enchanters, which brave men at the call of a higher duty could dare to defy.

No one knows what passed at Bayeux during the first weeks of that December. King and council, knights and nobles, squires and valets must have talked of little else but Becket and his doings. The pages at Winchester laid their hands on their dagger-hilts when the priest delivered his haughty message. The peers and gentlemen who surrounded Henry at Bayeux are not likely to have felt more gently as each day brought news from England of some fresh audacity. At length, a few days before Christmas, the three bishops arrived. Two were under the curse, and could not be admitted into the king's presence. The Archbishop of York, being only suspended, carried less contamination with him. At a council the archbishop was introduced, and produced Alexander's letters. From these it appeared not only that he and the other bishops were denounced by name, but that every person who had taken any part in the young king's coronation was by implication

bishops had received the prohibition till the ceremony was over; while there is reason to believe that the prohibitory letter, which the king might have respected, had been kept back by Becket himself.

The Archbishop of York still advised forbearance, and an appeal once more to Rome. The pope would see at last what Becket really was, and would relieve the country of him. But an appeal to Rome would take time, and England meanwhile might be in flames. 'By God's eyes,' said the king, 'if all are excommunicated who were concerned in the coronation, I am excommunicated also.' Some one (the name of the speaker is not mentioned) said that there would be no peace while Becket lived. With the fierce impatience of a man baffled by a problem which he has done his best to solve, and has failed through no fault of his own, Henry is reported to have exclaimed: 'Is this varlet that I loaded with kindness, that came first to court to me on a lame mule, to insult me and my children, and take my crown from me? What cowards have I about me, that no one will deliver me from this lowborn priest!' It is very likely that Henry used such words. The



greatest prince that ever sat on throne, if tried as Henry had been, would have said the same; and Henry had used almost the same language to the bishops at Chinon in 1166. But it is evident that much is still untold. These passionate denunciations can have been no more than the outcome of long and ineffectual deliberation. Projects must have been talked over and rejected; orders were certainly conceived which were to be sent to the archbishop, and measures were devised for dealing with him short of his death. He was to be required to absolve the censured bishops. If he refused, he might be sent in custody to the young king, he might be brought to Normandy, he might be exiled from the English dominions, or he might be imprisoned in some English castle. Indications can be traced of all these plans; and something of the kind would probably have been resolved upon, although it must have been painfully clear also that, without the pope's help, none of them would really meet the difficulty. But the result was that the king's friends, seeing their master's perplexity, determined to take the risk on themselves, and deliver both him and their country. If the king acted, the king might be excommunicated, and the empire might be laid under interdict, with the consequences which every one foresaw. For their own acts

the penalty would but fall upon themselves. They did not know, perhaps, distinctly what they meant to do, but something might have to be done which the king must condemn if they proposed it to him.

> But being done unknown,
> He would have found it afterwards well done.

Impetuous loyalty to the sovereign was in the spirit of the age.

Among the gentlemen about his person whom Henry had intended to employ, could he have resolved upon the instructions which were to be given to them, were four knights of high birth and large estate—Sir Reginald Fitzurse, of Somersetshire, a tenant in chief of the Crown, whom Becket himself had originally introduced into the court; Sir Hugh de Morville, custodian of Knaresborough Castle, and justiciary of Northumberland; Sir William de Tracy, half a Saxon, with royal blood in him; and Sir Richard le Breton, who had been moved to volunteer in the service by another instance of Becket's dangerous meddling. Le Breton was a friend of the king's brother William, whom the archbishop had separated from the lady to whom he was about to be married on some plea of consanguinity. Sir William de Mandeville and others were to have been joined in the commission. But these four chose to anticipate

both their companions and their final orders, and started alone.[1] Their disappearance was observed. An express was sent to recall them, and the king supposed that they had returned. But they had gone by separate routes to separate ports. The weather was fair for the season of the year, with an east wind perhaps; and each had found a vessel without difficulty to carry him across the Channel. The rendezvous was Sir Ranulf de Broc's castle of Saltwood, near Hythe, thirteen miles from Canterbury.

The archbishop meanwhile had returned from his adventurous expedition. The young king and his advisers had determined to leave him no fair cause of complaint, and had sent orders for the restoration of his wine and the release of the captured seamen; but the archbishop would not wait for the State to do him justice. On Christmas Eve he was further exasperated by the appearance at the gate of his palace of one of his sumpter mules, which had been brutally mutilated by Sir Ranulf de Broc's kinsman

[1] Mandeville came afterwards to Canterbury, and being asked what he had been prepared to do if he had found the archbishop alive, he said 'that he would have taken the archbishop sharply to task for his attacks upon his sovereign: if the archbishop had been reasonable, there would have been peace; if he had persisted in his obstinacy and presumption, beyond doubt he would have been compelled to yield.' Mandeville, presumably, had direct instructions from the king. *Materials*, vol. i. p. 126.

out. 'Bulls of Bashan compassed the archbishop round about.' The Earl of Cornwall's warning had reached him, but 'fight, not flight,' was alone in his thoughts. He, too, was probably weary of the strife, and may have felt that he would serve his cause more effectually by death than by life. On Christmas day he preached in the cathedral on the text 'Peace to men of good will.' There was no peace, he said, except to men of good will. He spoke passionately of the trials of the Church. As he drew towards an end he alluded to the possibility of his own martyrdom. He could scarcely articulate for tears. The congregation were sobbing round him. Suddenly his face altered, his tone changed. Glowing with anger, with the fatal candles in front of him, and in a voice of thunder, the solemn and the absurd strangely blended in the overwhelming sense of his own wrongs, he cursed the intruders into his churches; he cursed Sir Ranulf de Broc; he cursed Robert de Broc for cutting off his mule's tail; he cursed by name several of the old king's most intimate councillors who were at the court in Normandy. At each fierce imprecation he quenched a light, and dashed down a candle. 'As he spoke,

says the enthusiastic Herbert, repeating the figure under which he had described his master's appearance at Northampton, 'you saw the very beast of the prophet's vision, with the face of a lion and the face of a man.' He had drawn the spiritual sword, as he had sworn that he would. So experienced a man of the world could not have failed to foresee that he was provoking passions which would no longer respect his office, and that no rising in England would now be in time to save him. He was in better spirits, it was observed, after he had discharged his anathema. The Christmas festival was held in the hall. Asceticism was a virtue which was never easy to him. He indulged his natural inclinations at all permitted times, and on this occasion he ate and drank more copiously than usual.

The next day Becket received another warning that he was in personal danger. He needed no friends to tell him that. The only attention which he paid to these messages was to send his secretary Herbert and his cross-bearer Alexander Llewellyn to France, to report his situation to Lewis and to the Archbishop of Sens.[1] He told

[1] One of his complaints, presented by the Abbot of St. Albans, had been that his clergy were not allowed to leave the realm. There seems to have been no practical difficulty.

Herbert at parting that he would see his face no more.

So passed at Canterbury Saturday, Sunday, and Monday, the 26th, 27th, and 28th of December. On that same Monday afternoon the four knights arrived at Saltwood. They were expected, for Sir Ranulf with a party of men-at-arms had gone to meet them. There on their arrival they learned the fresh excommunications which had been pronounced against their host and against their friends at the court. The news could only have confirmed whatever resolutions they had formed.

On the morning of the 29th they rode with an escort of horse along the old Roman road to Canterbury. They halted at St. Augustine's Monastery, where they were entertained by the abbot elect, Becket's old enemy, the scandalous Clarembald. They perhaps dined there. At any rate they issued a proclamation bidding the inhabitants remain quiet in their houses in the king's name, and then, with some of Clarembald's armed servants in addition to their own party, they went on to the great gate of the archbishop's palace. Leaving their men outside, the four knights alighted and entered the court. They unbuckled their swords, leaving them at the lodge, and, throwing gowns over their armour, they strode

across to the door of the hall. Their appearance could hardly have been unexpected. It was now three o'clock in the afternoon. They had been some time in the town, and their arrival could not fail to have been reported. The archbishop's midday meal was over. The servants were dining on the remains, and the usual company of mendicants were waiting for their turn. The archbishop had been again disturbed at daybreak by intimation of danger. He had advised any of his clergy who were afraid to escape to Sandwich; but none of them had left him. He had heard mass as usual. He had received his customary floggings. At dinner, he observed, when some one remarked on his drinking, that a man that had blood to lose needed wine to support him. Afterwards he had retired into an inner room with John of Salisbury, his chaplain Fitzstephen, Edward Grim of Cambridge, who was on a visit to him, and several others, and was now sitting in conversation with them in the declining light of the winter afternoon till the bell should ring for vespers.

The knights were recognized, when they entered the hall, as belonging to the old king's court. The steward invited them to eat. They declined, and desired him to inform the archbishop that they had

arrived with a message from the court. This was the first communication which the archbishop had received from Henry since he had used his name so freely to cover acts which, could Henry have anticipated them, would have barred his return to Canterbury for ever. The insincere professions of peace had covered an intention of provoking a rebellion. The truth was now plain. There was no room any more for excuse or palliation. What course had the king determined on?[1]

The knights were introduced. They advanced. The archbishop neither spoke nor looked at them, but continued talking to a monk who was next him. He himself was sitting on a bed. The rest of the party present were on the floor. The knights seated themselves in the same manner, and for a few moments there was silence. Then Becket's black restless eye glanced from one to the other. He slightly noticed Tracy; and Fitzurse said a few unrecorded sentences to him, which ended with 'God help you!' To Becket's friends the words sounded like insolence. They may have meant no more than pity.

[1] I have compiled the description of this remarkable scene from the different biographies. They vary slightly, but not much. Grim and Fitzstephen were both present.

Becket's face flushed. Fitzurse went on: 'We bring you the commands of the king beyond the sea; will you hear us in public or in private?' Becket said he cared not. 'In private, then,' said Fitzurse. The monks thought afterwards that Fitzurse had meant to kill the archbishop where he sat. If the knights had entered the palace, thronged as it was with men, with any such intention, they would scarcely have left their swords behind them. The room was cleared, and a short altercation followed, of which nothing is known save that it ended speedily in high words on both sides. Becket called in his clergy again, his lay servants being excluded,[1] and bade Fitzurse go on. 'Be it so,' Sir Reginald said. 'Listen then to what the king says. When the peace was made, he put aside all his complaints against you. He allowed you to return, as you desired, free to your see. You have now added contempt to your other offences. You have broken the treaty. Your pride has tempted you to defy your lord and master to your own sorrow. You have censured the bishops by whose ministration the prince was crowned. You have pronounced an anathema against the king's ministers, by whose advice he is guided in the management of the Empire. You have made it plain

[1] 'Laicis omnibus exclusis.'

that if you could you would take the prince's crown from him. Your plots and contrivances to attain your ends are notorious to all men. Say, then, will you attend us to the king's presence, and there answer for yourself? For this we are sent.'

The archbishop declared that he had never wished any hurt to the prince. The king had no occasion to be displeased if crowds came about him in the towns and cities after they had been so long deprived of his presence. If he had done any wrong he would make satisfaction, but he protested against being suspected of intentions which had never entered his mind.

Fitzurse did not enter into an altercation with him, but continued: 'The king commands further that you and your clerks repair without delay to the young king's presence, and swear allegiance, and promise to amend your faults.'

The archbishop's temper was rising. 'I will do whatever may be reasonable,' he said; 'but I tell you plainly the king shall have no oaths from me, nor from any one of my clergy. There has been too much perjury already. I have absolved many, with God's help, who had perjured themselves.[1] I will absolve the rest when He permits.'

[1] He was alluding to the bishops who had sworn to the Constitutions of Clarendon.

'I understand you to say that you will not obey,' said Fitzurse; and went on in the same tone: 'The king commands you to absolve the bishops whom you have excommunicated without his permission (*absque licentiâ suâ*).

'The pope sentenced the bishops,' the archbishop said. 'If you are not pleased, you must go to him. The affair is none of mine.'

Fitzurse said it had been done at his instigation, which he did not deny; but he proceeded to reassert that the king had given him permission. He had complained at the time of the peace of the injury which he had suffered in the coronation, and the king had told him that he might obtain from the pope any satisfaction for which he liked to ask.

If this was all the consent which the king had given, the pretence of his authority was inexcusable. 'Ay, ay!' said Fitzurse; 'will you make the king out to be a traitor, then? The king gave you leave to excommunicate the bishops when they were acting by his own order! It is more than we can bear to listen to such monstrous accusations.'

John of Salisbury tried to check the archbishop's imprudent tongue, and whispered to him to speak to the knights in private; but when the passion was on him, no mule was more ungovernable than Becket.

Drawing to a conclusion, Fitzurse said to him: 'Since you refuse to do any one of those things which the king requires of you, his final commands are that you and your clergy shall forthwith depart out of this realm and out of his dominions, never more to return.[1] You have broken the peace, and the king cannot trust you again.'

Becket answered wildly that he would not go—never again would he leave England. Nothing but death should now part him from his church. Stung by the reproach of ill-faith, he poured out the catalogue of his own injuries. He had been promised restoration, and instead of restoration he had been robbed and insulted. Ranulf de Broc had laid an embargo on his wine. Robert de Broc had cut off his mule's tail, and now the knights had come to menace him.

De Morville said that if he had suffered any wrong he had only to appeal to the council, and justice would be done.

Becket did not wish for the council's justice. 'I have complained enough,' he said; 'so many wrongs

[1] 'Hoc est præceptum regis, ut de regno et terrâ quæ ipsius subjacet imperio cum tuis omnibus egrediaris; neque enim pax erit tibi vel tuorum cuiquam ab hâc die, quia pacem violâsti.' These words are given by Grim, who heard them spoken. *Materials*, vol. ii. p. 432.

access to the court. Neither one king nor the other will do me right. I will endure it no more. I will use my own powers as archbishop, and no child of man shall prevent me.'

'You will lay the realm under interdict then, and excommunicate the whole of us?' said Fitzurse.

'So God help me,' said one of the others, 'he shall not do that. He has excommunicated over-many already. We have borne too long with him.'

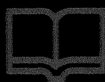
The knights sprang to their feet, twisting their gloves and swinging their arms. The archbishop rose. In the general noise words could no longer be accurately heard. At length the knights moved to leave the room, and, addressing the archbishop's attendants, said, 'In the king's name we command you to see that this man does not escape.'

'Do you think I shall fly, then?' cried the archbishop. 'Neither for the king nor for any living man will I fly. You cannot be more ready to kill me than I am to die. . . . Here you will find me,' he shouted, following them to the door as they went out, and calling after them. Some of his friends thought that he had asked De Morville to come back and speak quietly with him, but it was

strange that you will never be advised. What occasion was there for you to go after these men and exasperate them with your bitter speeches? You would have done better surely by being quiet and giving them a milder answer. They mean no good, and you only commit yourself.'

The archbishop sighed, and said, 'I have done with advice. I know what I have before me.'

It must have been now past four o'clock; and unless there were lights the room was almost dark. Beyond the archbishop's chamber was an ante-room, beyond the ante-room the hall. The knights, passing through the hall into the quadrangle, and thence to the lodge, called their men to arms. The great gate was closed. A mounted guard was stationed outside with orders to allow no one to go out or in. The knights threw off their cloaks and buckled on their swords. This was the work of a few minutes. From the cathedral tower the vesper bell was beginning to sound. The archbishop had seated himself to recover from the agitation of the preceding scene, when a breathless monk rushed in to say that the knights were arming. 'Who cares? Let them arm,' was all



that the archbishop said. His clergy were less indifferent. If the archbishop was ready for death, they were not. The door from the hall into the court was closed and barred, and a short respite was thus secured. The intention of the knights, it may be presumed, was to seize the archbishop and carry him off to Saltwood, or to De Morville's castle at Knaresborough, or perhaps to Normandy. Coming back to execute their purpose, they found themselves stopped by the hall door. To burst it open would require time; the ante-room between the hall and the archbishop's apartments opened by an oriel window and an outside stair into a garden. Robert de Broc, who knew the house well, led the way to it in the dusk. The steps were broken, but a ladder was standing against the window, by which the knights mounted, and the crash of the falling casement told the fluttered group about the archbishop that their enemies were upon them. There was still a moment. The party who entered by the window, instead of turning into the archbishop's room, first went into the hall to open the door and admit their comrades. From the archbishop's room a second passage, little used, opened into the north-west corner of the cloister, and from the cloister there was a way into the north transept of the cathedral. The cry was, 'To the church. To

the church.' There at least there would be immediate safety.

The archbishop had told the knights that they would find him where they left him. He did not choose to show fear, or he was afraid, as some thought, of losing his martyrdom. He would not move. The bell had ceased. They reminded him that vespers had begun, and that he ought to be in the cathedral. Half yielding, half resisting, his friends swept him down the passage into the cloister. His cross had been forgotten in the haste. He refused to stir till it was fetched and carried before him as usual. Then only, himself incapable of fear, and rebuking the terror of the rest, he advanced deliberately up the cloister to the church door.[1] As he entered the cathedral cries were heard from which it became plain that the knights had broken into the archbishop's room, had found the passage, and were following him. Almost immediately Fitzurse, Tracy, De Morville, and Le Breton were discerned,

[1] Those who desire a more particular account of the scene about to be described should refer to Dean Stanley's essay on the murder of Becket, which is printed in his *Antiquities of Canterbury*. Along with an exact knowledge of the localities and a minute acquaintance with the contemporary narratives, Dr. Stanley combines the far more rare power of historical imagination, which enables him to replace out of his materials an exact picture of what took place.

in the twilight, coming through the cloister in their armour, with drawn swords, and axes in their left hands. A company of men-at-arms was behind them. In front they were driving before them a frightened flock of monks.

From the middle of the transept in which the archbishop was standing a single pillar rose into the roof. On the eastern side of it opened a chapel of St. Benedict, in which were the tombs of several of the old primates. On the west, running parallel to the nave, was a lady chapel. Behind the pillar, steps led up into the choir, where voices were already singing vespers. A faint light may have been reflected into the transept from the choir tapers, and candles may perhaps have been burning before the altars in the two chapels—of light from without through the windows at that hour there could have been scarcely any. Seeing the knights coming on, the clergy who had entered with the archbishop closed the door and barred it. 'What do you fear?' he cried in a clear, loud voice. 'Out of the way, you cowards! The Church of God must not be made a fortress.' He stepped back and reopened the door with his own hands, to let in the trembling wretches who had been shut out. They rushed past him, and scattered in the hiding-places of the vast sanctuary,

of Canterbury, Benedict, John of Salisbury himself, forsook him to shift for themselves, admitting frankly that they were unworthy of martyrdom. The archbishop was left alone with his chaplain Fitzstephen, Robert of Merton his old master, and Edward Grim, the stranger from Cambridge—or perhaps with Grim only, who says that he was the only one who stayed, and was the only one certainly who showed any sign of courage. A cry had been raised in the choir that armed men were breaking into the cathedral. The vespers ceased; the few monks assembled left their seats and rushed to the edge of the transept, looking wildly into the darkness.

The archbishop was on the fourth step beyond the central pillar ascending into the choir when the knights came in. The outline of his figure may have been just visible to them, if light fell upon it from candles in the lady chapel. Fitzurse passed to the right of the pillar, De Morville, Tracy, and Le Breton to the left. Robert de Broc and Hugh Mauclerc, an apostate priest, remained at the door by which they entered. A voice cried 'Where is the traitor? Where is Thomas Becket?' There was silence; such a name could not be acknowledged.



'Where is the archbishop?' Fitzurse shouted. 'I am here,' the archbishop replied, descending the steps, and meeting the knights full in the face. What do you want with me? I am not afraid of your swords. I will not do what is unjust.' The knights closed round him. 'Absolve the persons whom you have excommunicated,' they said, 'and take off the suspensions.' 'They have made no satisfaction,' he answered; 'I will not.' 'Then you shall die as you have deserved,' they said.

They had not meant to kill him—certainly not at that time and in that place. One of them touched him on the shoulder with the flat of his sword, and hissed in his ears, 'Fly, or you are a dead man.' There was still time; with a few steps he would have been lost in the gloom of the cathedral, and could have concealed himself in any one of a hundred hiding-places. But he was careless of life, and he felt that his time was come. 'I am ready to die,' he said. 'May the Church through my blood obtain peace and liberty! I charge you in the name of God that you hurt no one here but me.' The people from the town were now pouring into the cathedral; De Morville was keeping them back with difficulty at the head of the steps from the choir, and there was danger of a rescue. Fitzurse seized hold

at the indignity of an arrest. 'Touch me not, Reginald!' he said, wrenching his cloak out of Fitzurse's grasp. 'Off, thou pander, thou!'[1] Le Breton and Fitzurse grasped him again, and tried to force him upon Tracy's back. He grappled with Tracy and flung him to the ground, and then stood with his back against the pillar, Edward Grim supporting him. He reproached Fitzurse for ingratitude for past kindness; Fitzurse whispered to him again to fly. 'I will not fly,' he said, and then Fitzurse swept his sword over him and dashed off his cap. Tracy, rising from the pavement, struck direct at his head. Grim raised his arm and caught the blow. The arm fell broken, and the one friend found faithful sank back disabled against the wall. The sword, with its remaining force, wounded the archbishop above the forehead, and the blood trickled down his face. Standing firmly with his hands clasped, he bent his neck for the death-stroke, saying in a low voice, 'I am prepared to die for Christ and for His Church.' These were his last words. Tracy again struck him. He fell forward upon his knees

[1] 'Lenonem appellans.'—Grim.

and hands. In that position Le Breton dealt him a blow which severed the scalp from the head and broke the sword against the stone, saying, 'Take that for my Lord William.' De Broc or Mauclerc—the needless ferocity was attributed to both of them—strode forward from the cloister door, set his foot on the neck of the dead lion, and spread the brains upon the pavement with his sword's point. 'We may go,' he said; 'the traitor is dead, and will trouble us no more.'

Such was the murder of Becket, the echoes of which are still heard across seven centuries of time, and which, be the final judgment upon it what it may, has its place among the most enduring incidents of English history. Was Becket a martyr, or was he justly executed as a traitor to his sovereign? Even in that supreme moment of terror and wonder, opinions were divided among his own monks. That very night Grim heard one of them say, 'He is no martyr, he is justly served.' Another said, scarcely feeling, perhaps, the meaning of the words, 'He wished to be king and more than king. Let him be king, let him be king.' Whether the cause for which he died was to prevail, or whether the sacrifice had been in vain, hung on the answer which would be given to this momentous question. In a few days

it was lawful to use the ordinary prayers for the repose of the dead man's soul, or whether, in consequence of the astounding miracles which were instantly worked by his remains, the pope's judgment ought not to be anticipated, and the archbishop be at once adored as a saint in heaven.

XI.

Martyr for the Church of Christ, or turbulent incendiary justly punished for his madness or presumption? That was the alternative which lay before the judgment of the Christian world. On the response which would be given depended interests which stretched far beyond the limits of Becket's own island home. How vast were the issues, how possible was an unfavourable conclusion, may be seen in the passionate language in which Benedict of Canterbury describes the general feeling, and relates the influences by which alone the popular verdict was decided in the archbishop's favour.

The crown of our head was taken from us, the glory of

angels and of Angles. We were orphans who had lost their father. The mother Church was mourning, and her children were not lamenting. She sought for some to comfort her, yet found she none. She was weeping, and her children were glad. The Lady of Nations sate in sorrow; she was the scorn of her friends. The brethren mingled their bread with tears, but they kept silence. Had not light risen upon us from on high, we had been lost for ever. Praised be He who looked upon us in the day of our affliction! All generations shall now call us blessed. When the martyr was slain our young men saw visions, our old men dreamed dreams; and then came the miracles, and we knew that God had exalted the horn of his anointed one.

The sheep were scattered: the hirelings had fled. There had not been found a man who would stand beside the lord of Canterbury against the workers of iniquity. The second part of Christendom had gone astray after the idol Baal, the apostate, the antipope. Who can say what the end might not have been? In the blood of the martyr of Canterbury the Most High provided an expiation for the sins of the world. The darkness passed away before the splendour of the miracles. The seed of the word sprang up. Unnumbered sinners are converted daily, and beat their breasts and turn back into the fold. Our anointed Gideon had his lamp in a pitcher; the clay of the earthly body was broken, and light shone out. This is the light by which at the beginning of the schism the Western Church rejected Octavian and chose Alexander for her shepherd. If Alexander had not been our true father, the martyr who adhered to him would have been defiled by the pitch which he had touched. His miracles prove that he had not been defiled. No man could do such wonders unless God was with him.

> defended. Let him not despise the law of the Church, or depart from obedience to Pope Alexander. Let his Holiness be glad that in these last times, and in the ends of the earth, he has found such a son. Let the children of Canterbury rejoice that the consolation of such miracles has been vouchsafed to them. Let the whole earth exult, and they that dwell therein. On those who walked in darkness the light has shined. The fearful shepherds have learned boldness; the sick are healed; the repenting sinner is forgiven. Through the merits of our blessed martyr the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have the gospel preached to them. In him all the miracles of the Gospel are repeated, and find their full completion. Four times the lamps about his tomb have been kindled by invisible hands. An innocent man who was mutilated by the executioner called on the martyr for help, and is restored: new eyes and new members have been granted to him. Never anywhere, so soon after death and in so brief a time, has saint been made illustrious by so many and so mighty tokens of God's favour.[1]

Miracles come when they are needed. They come not of fraud, but they come of an impassioned credulity which creates what it is determined to find. Given an enthusiastic desire that God should miraculously manifest Himself, the religious imagination is never long at a loss for facts to prove that He has

[1] *Materials*, vol. ii. p. 21 (abridged).

done so; and in proportion to the magnitude of the interests at stake is the scale of the miraculous interposition. In the eyes of Europe, the cause in which Becket fell was the cause of sacerdotalism as against the prosaic virtues of justice and common sense. Every superstitious mind in Christendom was at work immediately, generating supernatural evidence which should be universal and overwhelming. When once the impression was started that Becket's relics were working miracles it spread like an epidemic. Either the laws of nature were suspended, or for the four years which followed his death the power and the wish were gone to distinguish truth from falsehood. The most ordinary events were transfigured. That version of any story was held to be the truest which gave most honour to the martyr. That was the falsest which seemed to detract from his glory. As Becket in his life had represented the ambition and arrogance of the Catholic Church, and not its genuine excellence, so it was his fate in death to represent beyond all others the false side of Catholic teaching, and to gather round himself the most amazing agglomerate of lies.

The stream which was so soon to roll in so mighty a volume rose first in the humble breast of Benedict the monk. After the murder the body was lifted by

with one thought in the minds of all of them. Was the archbishop a saint, or was he a vain dreamer? God only could decide. Asleep or awake—he was unable to say which—Benedict conceived that he saw the archbishop going towards the altar in his robes, as if to say mass. He approached him trembling. 'My lord,' he supposed himself to have said, 'are you not dead?' The archbishop answered, 'I was dead, but I have risen again.' 'If you are risen, and, as we believe, a martyr,' Benedict said, 'will you not manifest yourself to the world?' The archbishop showed Benedict a lantern with a candle dimly burning in it. 'I bear a light,' he said, 'but a cloud at present conceals it.' He then seemed to ascend the altar steps. The monks in the choir began the introit. The archbishop took the word from them, and in a rich full voice poured out, 'Arise, why sleepest thou, O Lord? Arise, and cast us not forth for ever.'

Benedict was dreaming; but the dream was converted into reality. The word went round the dormitory that the archbishop had risen from the dead and had appeared to Benedict. The monks,

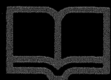
scarcely knowing whether they too were awake or entranced, flitted into the cathedral to gaze on the mysterious form before the altar. In the dim winter dawn they imagined they saw the dead man's arm raised as if to bless them. The candles had burnt out. Some one placed new candles in the sockets and lighted them. Those who did not know whose hand had done it concluded that it was an angel's. Contradiction was unheard or unbelieved; at such a moment incredulity was impious. Rumours flew abroad that miracles had already begun, and when the cathedral doors were opened the townspeople flocked in to adore. They rushed to the scene of the murder. They dipped their handkerchiefs in the sacred stream which lay moist upon the stones. A woman whose sight had been weak from some long disease touched her eyes with the blood, and cried aloud that she could again see clearly. Along with the tale of the crime there spread into the country, gathering volume as it rolled, the story of the wonders which had been wrought; and every pious heart which had beat for the archbishop when he was alive was set bounding with delighted enthusiasm. A lady in Sussex heard of the miracle with the woman. Her sight, too, was failing. *Divinitus inspirata*, under a divine inspiration, which anticipated the

days later a man at Canterbury who was actually blind recovered his sight. The brothers at the cathedral whose faith had been weak were supernaturally strengthened. The last doubter among them was converted by a vision.

In the outside world there were those who said that the miracles were delusion or enchantment; but with the scoffs came tales of the retribution which instantly overtook the scoffers. A priest at Nantes was heard to say that if strange things had happened at Canterbury the cause could not be the merits of the archbishop, for God would not work miracles for a traitor. As 'the man of Belial' uttered his blasphemies his eyes dropped from their sockets, and he fell to the ground foaming at the mouth. His companions carried him into a church, replaced the eye-balls, and sprinkled them with holy water, and prayed to St. Thomas for pardon. St. Thomas was slowly appeased, and the priest recovered, to be a sadder and a wiser man.

Sir Thomas of Etton had known Becket in early youth, and refused to believe that a profligate scoundrel could be a saint.[1] Sir Thomas was seized

[1] 'Martyrem libidinosi et nebulonis elogio notans.'—William of Canterbury. *Materials*, vol. i. p. 153.



with a quinsy which almost killed him, and only saved his life by instant repentance.

In vain the De Brocs and their friends attempted to stem the torrent by threatening to drag the body through the streets, to cut it in pieces, and fling it into a cesspool. The mob of Kent would have risen in arms, and burnt their castle over their heads, had they dared to touch so precious a possession. The archbishop was laid in a marble sarcophagus before the altar of St. John the Baptist in the crypt. The brain which De Broc's rude sword had spread out was gathered up by reverent hands, the blood stains were scraped off the stones, and the precious relics were placed on the stone lid where they could be seen by the faithful. When the body was stripped for burial, on the back were seen the marks of the stripes which he had received on the morning of his death. The hair shirt and drawers were found swarming (*scaturientes*) with vermin. These transcendent evidences of sanctity were laid beside the other treasures, and a wall was built round the tomb to protect it from profanation, with openings through which the sick and maimed, who now came in daily crowds for the martyr's help, could gaze and be healed.

Next came the more awful question. The new saint was jealous of his honour: was it safe to with-

hold his title from him till the pope had spoken? He had shown himself alive—was it permitted to pray for him as if he were dead? Throughout England the souls of the brethren were exercised by this dangerous uncertainty. In some places the question was settled in the saint's favour by an opportune dream. At Canterbury itself more caution was necessary, and John of Salisbury wrote to the Bishop of Poitiers for advice:

The blind see (he said), the deaf hear, the dumb speak, the lame walk, the devils are cast out. To pray for the soul of one whom God has distinguished by miracles so illustrious is injurious to him, and bears a show of unbelief. We should have sent to consult the pope, but the passages are stopped, and no one can leave the harbours without a passport. For ourselves, we have concluded that we ought to recognize the will of God without waiting for the holy father's sanction.[1]

The pope's ultimate resolution it was impossible to doubt. The party of the antipope in England had been put an end to by the miracles. Many people had begun to waver in their allegiance, and now all uncertainty was gone. It was universally admitted that these wonders displayed in favour of a person who had been on Alexander's side conclusively

[1] John of Salisbury to the Bishop of Poitiers. *Letters*, vol. ii. pp. 257. 258 (abridged).

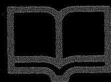
decided the question.[1] Alexander would do well, however, John of Salisbury thought, to pronounce the canonization with as little delay as possible.

The epidemic was still in its infancy. The miracles already mentioned had been worked in comparative privacy in the first few weeks which succeeded the martyrdom. Before the summer the archbishop's admirers were contending with each other in every part of Europe which could report the most amazing miracles that had been worked by his intervention or by the use of his name. Pilgrims began to stream to Canterbury with their tales of marvel and their rich thanksgiving offerings. A committee of monks was appointed to examine each story in detail. Their duty was to assure themselves that the alleged miracle was reality and not imagination. Yet thousands were allowed to pass as adequately and clearly proved. Every day under their own eyes the laws of nature were set aside. The aperture in the wall round the tomb contracted or enlarged according to the merit of the visitants. A small and delicate woman could not pass so much

[1] 'Dubitatur a plurimis an pars domini papæ in quâ stamus de justitiâ niteretur, sed eam a crimine gloriosus martyr absolvit, qui si fautor erat schismatis nequaquam tantis miraculis coruscaret.'—To the Archbishop of Sens. *Letters*, vol. ii. p. 263.

possessed by a devil, but honestly desirous of salvation, plunged through, body and all. The spectators (Benedict among them, who tells the story) supposed it would be necessary to pull the wall down to get him free. He passed out with the same ease with which he had entered. But when the monks told him to repeat the experiment, stone and mortar had resumed their properties.

The blood gathered on the handkerchiefs from the pavement had shown powers so extraordinary that there was a universal demand for it. The difficulty from the limitation of quantity was got over in various ways. At first it exhibited a capacity for self-multiplication. A single drop might be poured into a bottle, and the bottle would be found full. Afterwards a miraculous fountain broke out in the crypt, with the water from which the blood was mixed. The smallest globule of blood, fined down by successive recombinations to a fraction of unimaginable minuteness, imparted to the water the virtues of the perfect original. St. Thomas's water became the favourite remedy for all diseases throughout the Christian world, the sole condition of a cure being that doctor's medicines should be abjured.

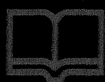


The behaviour of the liquid, as described by Benedict who relates what he professes to have continually seen, was eccentric and at first incomprehensible. A monk at the fountain distributed it to the pilgrims, who brought wooden boxes in which to carry it away. When poured into these boxes it would sometimes effervesce or boil. More often the box would split in the pilgrim's hand. Some sin unconfessed was supposed to be the cause, and the box itself, after such a misfortune, was left as an offering at the tomb. The splitting action after a time grew less violent, and was confined to a light crack. One day a woman brought a box which became thus slightly injured. The monk to whom she gave it thought it was too good to be wasted, and was meditating in his own mind that he would keep it for himself. At the moment that the wicked thought formed itself the box flew to pieces in his hands with a loud crash. He dropped it, shrieking that it was possessed. Benedict and others ran in, hearing him cry, to find him in an agony of terror. The amusement with which Benedict admits that they listened to his story suggests a suspicion that in this instance at least the incident was not wholly supernatural.[1] Finding

[1] 'Hoc miraculum tam joco et risui multis extitit quam admirationi.'—*Materials*, vol. ii.

stone cracked like the wood. A youth at Canterbury suggested tin; the bursting miracle ceased, and the meaning of it was then perceived. The pilgrims were intended to carry St. Thomas's water round the world, hung about their necks in bottles which could be at once secure and sufficiently diminutive for transport. A vessel that could be relied on being thus obtained, the trade became enormous. Though the holy thing might not be sold, the recipient of the gift expressed his gratitude by corresponding presents; and no diamond mine ever brought more wealth to its owners than St. Thomas's water brought to the monks of Canterbury.

As time went on the miracles grew more and more prodigious. At first weak eyes were made strong; then sight was restored which was wholly gone. At first sick men were made whole; then dead men were brought back to life. At first there was the unconscious exaggeration of real phenomena; then there was incautious embellishment; finally, in some instances, of course with the best intentions, there was perhaps deliberate lying. To which of these classes the story should be assigned which has now to be told the reader must decide for himself.



real supernatural occurrence and an intentional fraud.

In the year which followed Becket's death there lived near Bedford a small farmer named Ailward. This Ailward, unable to recover otherwise a debt from one of his neighbours, broke into his debtor's house, and took possession of certain small articles of furniture to hold as security. The debtor pursued him, wounded him in a scuffle, and carried him before the head constable of the district, who happened to be Ailward's personal enemy. A charge of burglary was brought against him, with the constable's support. Ailward was taken before the sheriff, Sir Richard Fitzosbert, and committed to Bedford Gaol to await his trial. A priest in the interval took charge of his soul, gave him a whip with which to flog himself five times a day, and advised him to consign his cause to the Virgin, and especially to the martyr Thomas. At the end of a month he was brought before the justices at Leighton Buzzard. The constable appeared to prosecute; and his own story not being received as true, he applied for wager of battle with his accuser, or else for the ordeal of hot iron. Through underhand

influence the judges refused either of these comparatively favourable alternatives, and sentenced the prisoner to the ordeal of water, which meant death by drowning or else dismemberment. The law of the Conqueror was still in force; the penalty of felony was the loss of his eyes and further mutilation; and the water ordeal being over, which was merely a form, Ailward, in the presence of a large number of clergy and laity, was delivered to the knife. He bled so much that he was supposed to be dying, and he received the last sacrament. A compassionate neighbour, however, took him into his house, and attended to his wounds, which began slowly to heal. On the tenth night St. Thomas came to his bed-side, made a cross on his forehead, and told him that if he presented himself the next day with a candle at the altar of the Virgin in Bedford Church, and did not doubt in his heart, but believed that God was able and willing to cure him, his eyes would be restored. In the morning he related his vision. It was reported to the dean, who himself accompanied him to the altar, the townspeople coming in crowds to witness the promised miracle. The blinded victim of injustice and false evidence believed as he was directed, and prayed as he was directed. The bandages were then re-

he could again see. He set off at once to offer his thanks to his preserver at Canterbury. The rumour of the miracle had preceded him, and in London he was detained by the bishop till the truth had been inquired into. The result was a deposition signed by the Mayor and Corporation of Bedford, declaring that they had ascertained the completeness of the mutilation beyond all possibility of doubt.

Very curiously, precisely the same miracle was repeated under similar conditions three years later. Some cavil had perhaps been raised on the sufficiency of the evidence. The burgesses of a country town were not, it may have been thought, men of sufficient knowledge and education to be relied upon in so extraordinary a case. The very ability of a saint to restore parts of the human body which had been removed may have been privately called in question, and to silence incredulity the feat was performed a second time. There appeared in Canterbury in 1176 a youth named Rogers, bringing with him a letter from Hugh, Bishop of Durham, to the prior of the monastery. The letter stated that in the preceding September the bearer had

been convicted of theft, and had been mutilated in the usual manner. He had subsequently begged his living in the Durham streets, and was well known to every one in the town to be perfectly blind. In this condition he had prayed to St. Thomas. St. Thomas had appeared to him in a red gown, with a mitre on his head and three wax candles in his hand, and had promised him restoration. From that moment his sight began to return, and in a short time he could discern the smallest objects. Though, as at Bedford, the eyes were *modicæ quantitatis,* exceedingly minute, the functions were perfect. The bishop, to leave no room for mistake, took the oaths of the executioner and the witnesses of the mutilation. The cathedral bells were rung, and thanksgiving services were offered to God and St. Thomas.

So far the Bishop of Durham. But the story received a further confirmation by a coincidence scarcely less singular. When the subject of the miracle came to Canterbury, the judge who had tried him happened to be on a visit to the monastery. The meeting was purely accidental. The judge had been interested in the boy, and had closely observed him. He was able to swear that the eyes which he then saw were not the eyes which had

been cut out by the executioner at Durham, being different from them in form and colour.[1]

When the minds of bishops and judges were thus affected, we cease to wonder at the thousand similar stories which passed into popular belief. Many of them are childish, many grossly ridiculous. The language of the archbishop on his miraculous appearances was not like his own, but was the evident creation of the visionary who was the occasion of his visit; and his actions were alternately the actions of a benevolent angel or a malignant imp. But all alike were received as authentic, and served to swell the flood of illusion which overspread the Christian world. For four years the entire supernatural administration of the Church economy was passed over to St. Thomas; as if Heaven designed to vindicate the cause of the martyr of Canterbury by special and extraordinary favour. In vain during those years were prayers addressed to the blessed Virgin; in vain the cripple brought his offerings to shrines where a miracle had never been refused before. The Virgin and the other dispensers of divine grace had been suspended from activity, that the champion of the Church might have the glory to himself.

[1] *Materials*, vol. i. p. 423.

The elder saints had long gone to and fro on errands of mercy. They were now allowed to repose, and St. Thomas was all in all.[1]

Greater for the time than the Blessed Virgin, greater than the saints!—nay, another superiority was assigned to him still more astounding. The sacrifice of St. Thomas was considered to be wider and more gracious in its operation than the sacrifice on Calvary. Foliot, Bishop of London, so long his great antagonist, was taken ill a few years after the murder, and was thought to be dying. He was speechless. The Bishop of Salisbury sat by him, endeavouring to hear his confession before giving him the sacrament. The voice was choked, the lips were closed; he could neither confess his sins nor swallow his *viaticum*, and nothing lay before him

[1] William of Canterbury mentions the case of a man in distress who prayed without effect to the Virgin. 'Hujusmodi precibus,' he says, 'sæpius et propensius instabat; similiter et aliorum sanctorum suffragia postulabat, sed ad invocationem sui nominis non exaudierunt, qui retro tempora sua glorificationis habuerunt, ut et sua tempora propitiationis martyr modernus haberet. Pridem cucurrerant quantum potuerunt et quantum debuerunt signis et prodigiis coruscantes; nunc tandem erat et novo martyri currendum, ut in catalogo sanctorum mirificus haberetur, Domino dispensante quæ, a quibus, et quibus temporibus fieri debeant. *Eo namque currente et magna spatia transcurrente, illis tanquam veteranis et emeritis interim debebatur otium.*'—*Materials*, vol. i. p. 290.

but inevitable hell, when, by a happy thought, sacrament was added to sacrament—the wafer was sprinkled with the water of St. Thomas, and again held to the mouth of the dying prelate. Marvel of marvels! the tightened sinews relaxed. The lips unclosed; the tongue resumed its office; and when all ghostly consolation had been duly offered and duly received, Foliot was allowed to recover.

'O martyr full of mercy!' exclaims the recorder of the miracle, 'blessedly forgetful art thou of thy own injuries, who didst thus give to drink to thy disobedient and rebellious brother of the fountain of thy own blood. O deed without example! O act incomparable! Christ gave his flesh and blood to be eaten and drunk by sinners. St. Thomas, who imitated Christ in his passion, imitates Him also in the sacrament. But there is this difference, that Christ damns those who eat and drink Him unworthily, or takes their lives from them, or afflicts them with diseases. The blessed Thomas, doing according to his Master's promise greater things than He, and being more full of mercy than He, gives his blood to his enemies as well as to his friends; and not only does not damn his enemies, but calls them back into the ways of peace. All men, therefore,

may come to him and drink without fear, and they shall find salvation, body and soul.'[1]

The details of the miracles contain many interesting pictures of old English life. St. Thomas was kind to persons drowned or drowning, kind to prisoners, especially kind to children. He was interested in naval matters—launching vessels from the stocks when the shipwrights could not move them, or saving mariners and fishermen in shipwrecks. According to William of Canterbury, the archbishop in his new condition had a weakness for the married clergy, many miracles being worked by him for a *focaria*. Dead lambs, geese, and pigs were restored to life, to silence Sadducees who doubted the resurrection. In remembrance of his old sporting days, the archbishop would mend the broken wings and legs of hawks which had suffered from the herons. Boys and girls found him always ready to listen to their small distresses. A Suffolk yeoman, William of Ramsholt, had invited a party to a feast. A neighbour had made him a present of a cheese, and his little daughter Beatrice had been directed to put it away in a safe place. Beatrice did as she was told, but went to play with her brother Hugh,

[1] *Materials*, vol. i. pp. 251, 252.

and forgot what she had done with it. The days went on; the feast day was near. The children hunted in every corner of the house, but no cheese could be found. The nearest town was far off. They had no money to buy another if they could reach it, and a whipping became sadly probable. An idea struck the little Hugh. 'Sister,' he said, 'I have heard that the blessed Thomas is good and kind. Let us pray to Thomas to help us.' They went to their beds, and, as Hugh foretold, the saint came to them in their dreams. 'Don't you remember,' he said, 'the old crock in the back kitchen, where the butter used to be kept?' They sprang up, and all was well.[1]

The original question between the king and the archbishop still agitated men's minds, and was still so far from practical settlement that visions were necessary to convert the impenitent. A knight of the court, who contended for the Constitutions of Clarendon, and continued stubborn, was struck with paralysis. Becket came and bade him observe that the Judge of truth had decided against the king by signs and wonders, and that it was a sin to doubt any further. The knight acknowledged

[1] *Materials*, vol. ii. p. 153.

his error. Others were less penetrable. The miracles, it was still said, might be deceptive; and, true or false, miracles could not alter matters of plain right or wrong. Even women were found who refused to believe; and a characteristic story is told, in which we catch a glimpse of one of the murderers.

A party of gentlemen were dining at a house in Sussex. Hugh de Morville was in the neighbourhood, and while they were sitting at dinner a note was brought in from him asking one of the guests who was an old acquaintance to call and see him. The person to whom the note was addressed read it with signs of horror. When the cause was explained, the lady of the house said, 'Is that all? What is there to be alarmed about? The priest Thomas is dead: well, why need that trouble us? The clergy were putting their feet on the necks of us all. The archbishop wanted to be the king's master, and he has not succeeded. Eat your victuals neighbour, like an honest man.' The poor lady expressed what doubtless many were feeling. An example was necessary, and one of her children was at once taken dangerously ill. The county neighbours said it was a judgment; she was made to confess her sins and carry her child to Canterbury

bury became enormously rich, and riches produced their natural effect. Giraldus Cambrensis, when he paid a visit there a few years later, found the monks dining more luxuriously than the king. According to Nigellus, the precentor of the cathedral, their own belief in the wonders which they daily witnessed was not profound, since in the midst of them Nigellus could write deliberately, as the excuse for the prevalent profligacy of churchmen, 'that the age of miracles was past.' It was observed, and perhaps commented on, that unless the offerings were handsome the miracles were often withheld. So obvious was this feature that William of Canterbury was obliged to apologize for it! 'The question rises,' he says, 'why the martyr takes such delight in these donations, being now, as he is, in heaven, where covetousness can have no place. Some say that the martyr, when in the body, on the occasion of his going into exile, borrowed much money, being in need of it for his fellow-exiles, and to make presents at court. Being unable to repay his creditors in life, he may have been anxious after death that his debts

should be discharged, lest his good name should suffer. And therefore it may be that all these kings and princes, knights, bishops, priests, monks, nuns, all ages and conditions, are inspired by God to come in such troops and take so many vows on them to grant pensions and annuities.[1]

There is no occasion to pursue into further details the history of this extraordinary alliance between religion and lying, which forced on Europe the most extravagant sacerdotalism by evidence as extravagant as itself. By an appropriate affinity the claims of the Church to spiritual supremacy were made to rest on falsehood, whether unconscious or deliberate, and when the falsehood ceased to be creditable the system which was based upon it collapsed. Thus all illusions work at last their own retribution. Ecclesiastical miracles are not worked in vindication of purity of life or piety of character. They do not intrude themselves into a presence to which they can lend no increase of beauty and furnish no additional authority. They are the spurious offspring of the passion of theologians for their own most extravagant assumptions. They are believed, they become the material of an idolatry, till

[1] *Materials*, vol. i. p. 327.

the awakened conscience of the better part of mankind rises at last in revolt, and the fantastic pretensions and the evidence alleged in support of them depart together and cumber the world no more. We return to authentic history.

XII.

When the news of the catastrophe at Canterbury arrived in Normandy, the king was for a time stunned. None knew better than he the temper of his subjects on the present condition of the dispute with the Church. The death of the great disturber was natural, and may, perhaps, have been inevitable. Nevertheless, if the result of it, as seemed too likely to be the case, was his own excommunication and an interdict on his dominions, a rebellion in Normandy was certain, and a rebellion in England was only too probable. Firm as might have been his own grasp, his hold on his continental duchies was not strengthened by his English sovereignty. The Norman nobles and prelates saw their country sliding into a province of the island kingdom which their fathers had subdued. If they were to lose their independence, their natural affinity was towards the

land with which they were geographically combined. The revolutionary forces were already at work which came to maturity in the next generation, and if Normandy and Anjou were laid under interdict for a crime committed in England and for an English cause, an immediate insurrection might be anticipated with certainty. The state of England was scarcely more satisfactory. The young princes, who had been over-indulged in childhood, were showing symptoms of mutiny. The private relations between an English sovereign and his family were not yet regarded as the property of his subjects; the chroniclers rarely indulged in details of royal scandals, and the dates of Henry's infidelities are vaguely given. Giraldus says that he remained true to his queen till she tempted her sons into rebellion, but Eleanor herself might have told the story differently, and the fire which was about to burst so furiously may have been long smouldering. As to the people generally, it was evident that Becket had a formidable faction among them. The hump-backed Earl of Leicester was dead, but his son, the new earl, was of the same temper as his father. The barons resented the demolition of their castles, which the king had already begun, and the curtailment of their feudal authority. An exasperating inquiry was

at that moment going forward into the conduct of the sheriffs. They had levied tax and toll at their pleasure, and the king's interference with them they regarded as an invasion of their liberties. Materials for complaint were lying about in abundance, and anything might be feared if to the injuries of the knights and barons were added the injuries of the Church, and rebellion could be gilded with a show of sanctity. The same spirit which sent them to die under the walls of Acre might prompt them equally to avenge the murder of the archbishop. Henry himself was a representative of his age. He, too, really believed that the clergy were semi-supernatural beings whose curse it might be dangerous to undergo. The murder itself had been accompanied with every circumstance most calculated to make a profound impression. The sacrilege was something, but the sacrilege was not the worst. Many a bloody scene had been witnessed in that age in church and cathedral; abbots had invaded one another at the head of armed parties; monks had fought and been killed within consecrated walls, and sacred vessels and sacred relics had been carried off among bleeding bodies. High dignitaries were occasionally poisoned in the sacramental wine, and such a crime, though serious, was not regarded as exceptionally dreadful.

But Becket had but just returned to England after a formal reconciliation in the presence of all Europe. The King of France, the Count of Flanders, and the Count of Blois had pledged their words for his safety. He had been killed in his own cathedral. He had fallen with a dignity and even grandeur which his bitterest enemies were obliged to admire. The murderers were Henry's own immediate attendants, and Henry could not deny that he had himself used words which they might construe into a sanction of what they had done.

Giraldus Cambrensis, who when young had seen and spoken with him, has left us a sketch of Henry II.'s appearance and character more than usually distinct. Henry was of middle height, with a thick short neck, and a square chest. His body was stout and fleshy, his arms sinewy and long. His head was round and large, his hair and beard reddish-brown, his complexion florid, his eyes grey, with fire glowing at the bottom of them. His habits were exceptionally temperate; he ate little, drank little, and was always extremely active. He was on horseback at dawn, either hunting or else on business. When off his horse he was on his feet, and rarely sat down till supper time. He was easy of approach, gracious, pleasant, and in conversation remarkably

agreeable. Notwithstanding his outdoor habits he had read largely, and his memory was extremely tenacious. It was said of him that he never forgot a face which he had once seen, or a thing which he had heard or read that was worth remembering. He was pious too, Giraldus says, *pietate spectabilis.* The piety unfortunately, in Giraldus's eyes, took the wrong shape of an over-zeal for justice, which brought him into his trouble with the Church, while to his technical 'religious duties' he was less attentive than he ought to have been. He allowed but an hour a day for mass, and while mass was being said he often thought of something else. To the poor he was profusely charitable, 'filling the hungry with good things, and sending the rich empty away.' He was *largus in publico, parvus in privato;* he spent freely in the public service and little on himself. As a statesman he was reserved, seldom showing his own thoughts. He was a good judge of character, rarely changing an opinion of a man which he had once formed. He was patient of opposition, and trusted much to time to find his way through difficulties. In war he was dangerous from his energy and his intellect. But he had no love for war, he was essentially a friend of peace, and after a battle could not control his emotion at the loss of

his men. 'In short,' Giraldus concludes, 'if God had but elected him to grace and converted him to a right understanding of the privileges of his Church, he would have been an incomparable prince.'[1] Such was Henry, the first of the English Plantagenet kings, a man whose faults it is easy to blame, whose many excellences it would have been less easy to imitate—a man of whom it may be said what can be affirmed but rarely of any mortal, that the more clearly his history is known the more his errors will be forgiven, the more we shall find to honour and admire.

He was at Argenteuil when the fatal account was brought to him. He shut himself in his room, ate nothing for three days, and for five weeks remained in penitential seclusion. Time was precious, for his enemies were not asleep. Lewis and the Archbishop of Sens wrote passionately to the pope, charging the king with the guilt of the murder, and insisting that so enormous an outrage should be punished at once and with the utmost severity. The Archbishop of Sens, on his own authority as legate, laid Normandy under interdict, and Alexander, startled into energy at last, sent persons to the spot to confirm the arch bishop's action, and to extend the censures over

[1] Giraldus, vol. v. p. 301, &c.

England. Henry roused himself at last. He despatched the archbishop of Rouen and two bishops to explain what had happened, so far as explanation was possible; and as the danger was pressing and bishops travelled slowly, three other churchmen, the Abbot of Valaise and the Archdeacons of Lisieux and Salisbury, pushed on before them. On their first arrival these envoys were refused an audience. When they were admitted to Alexander's presence at last, the attempt at palliation was listened to with horror. Two of Becket's clergy were at the papal court, and had possession of pope and cardinals, and it appeared only too likely that at the approaching Easter Alexander himself would declare Henry excommunicated. By private negotiations with some of the cardinals they were able to delay the sentence till the coming of the bishops. The bishops brought with them a promise on Henry's part to submit to any penance which the pope might enjoin, and to acquiesce in any order which the pope might prescribe for the government of the clergy. An immediate catastrophe was thus averted. Cardinals Albert and Theodoric were commissioned at leisure to repair to Normandy and do what might be found necessary. To the mortification of Lewis the censures were meanwhile suspended, and the inter

dict pronounced by the Archbishop of Sens was not confirmed.

Henry on his part prepared to deserve the pope's forgiveness. Uncertain what Alexander might resolve upon, he returned to England as soon as he had recovered his energy. He renewed the orders at the ports against the admission of strangers and against the introduction of briefs from Rome, which might disturb the public peace. He then at once undertook a duty which long before had been enjoined upon him by Alexander's predecessor, and had been left too long neglected.

Ireland had been converted to the Christian faith by an apostle from the Holy See but in seven centuries the Irish Church had degenerated from its purity. Customs had crept in unknown in other Latin communions, and savouring of schism. No regular communication had been maintained with the authorities at Rome; no confirmation of abbots and bishops had been applied for or paid for. At a council held in 1151 a papal legate had been present, and an arrangement had been made for the presentation of the palls of the four Irish archbishoprics. But the legate's general account of the state of Irish affairs increased the Pope's anxiety for more vigorous measures. Not only Peter's pence

and first-fruits were not paid to himself—not only tithes were not paid to the clergy—but the most sacred rites were perverted or neglected. In parts of the island children were not baptized at all. Where baptism was observed, it more resembled a magical ceremony than a sacrament of the Church. Any person who happened to be present at a birth dipped the child three times in water or milk, without security for the use of the appointed words. Marriage scarcely could be said to exist. An Irish chief took as many wives as he pleased, and paid no respect to degrees of consanguinity.[1] Even incest was not uncommon[2] among them. The clergy, though not immoral in the technical sense, were hard drinkers. The bishops lived in religious houses, and preferred a quiet life to interfering with lawlessness and violence. The people of Ireland, according to Giraldus, who was sent over to study their character, were bloodthirsty savages, and strangers who settled among them caught their habits by an irresistible instinct. But Ireland, religious Ireland especially, had something in its history which commanded

[1] 'Plerique enim illorum quot volebant uxores habebant, et etiam cognatas suas germanas habere solebant sibi uxores.'—Benedict, vol. i. p. 28.

[2] 'Non incestus vitant.'—Giraldus Cambrensis, vol. v. p. 138.

the water of St. Thomas. Apostles from Ireland had carried the Christian faith into Scotland, into Iceland, and into Scandinavia.

The popes felt the exclusion of so singular a country from the Catholic commonwealth to be a scandal which ought no longer to be acquiesced in. In 1155 Pope Adrian had laid before Henry II. the duty imposed on Christian princes to extend the truth among barbarous nations, to eradicate vice, and to secure Peter's pence to the Holy See; and a bull had been issued, sanctioning and enjoining the conquest of Ireland.[1]

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[1] Irish Catholic historians pretend that the bull was a Norman forgery. The bull was alleged to have been granted in 1155: in 1170 it was acted upon. In 1171-2 a council was held at Cashel, in which the reforms demanded by Pope Adrian were adopted, and the Irish Church was re-modelled, and a report of the proceedings was forwarded to Alexander III. In 1174 a confirmation of the original bull was published, professing to have been signed by Alexander. In 1177 Cardinal Vivian came as legate from Rome, who, in a synod at Dublin, declared formally in the pope's name that the sovereignty of Ireland was vested in the English king, and enjoined the Irish to submit *sub pœnâ anathematis*. It requires some hardihood to maintain in the face of these undisputed facts that the pope was kept in ignorance that the island had been invaded and conquered under a sanction doubly forged, and that Cardinal Vivian was either a party to the fraud, or that when in Ireland he never discovered it.

Busy with more pressing concerns, Henry had put off the expedition from year to year. Meanwhile, the Irish chiefs and kings were quarrelling among themselves. MacMorrough of Leinster was driven out, and had come to England for help. The king hesitated in his answer; but volunteers had been found for the service in Sir Robert Fitzstephen, Sir Maurice Prendergast, Sir Maurice Fitzgerald, Earl Richard Strigul, with other knights and gentlemen who were eager for adventure; and a Norman occupation had been made good along the eastern coast of Munster and Leinster. The invasion had been undertaken without the king's consent. He had affected to regard it with disapproval; and the Irish of the west, rallying from their first panic, were collecting in force to drive the intruders into the sea. The desirableness of doing something to entitle him to the pope's gratitude, the convenience of absence from home at a time when dangerous notices might be served upon him, and the certainty that Alexander would hesitate to pronounce him excommunicated when engaged in a conquest which, being undertaken under a papal sanction, resembled a crusade, determined Henry to use the opportunity, and at last accomplish the mission which Adrian had imposed upon him. After his return from Normandy, he

passed rapidly through England. He collected a fleet at Milford Haven, and landed at Waterford on October 18, 1171. All Ireland, except the north, at once submitted. The king spent the winter in Dublin in a palace of wattles, the best lodging which the country could afford. In the spring he was able to report to Alexander that the obnoxious customs were abolished, that Catholic discipline had been introduced, and that the Irish tribute would be thenceforward punctually remitted to the papal treasury.

Could he have remained in Ireland for another year, the conquest would have been completed; but in April he was recalled to meet the two cardinals who had arrived in Normandy to receive his submission for Becket's death. The Irish annexation was, of course, a service which was permitted to be counted in his favour, but the circumstances of the murder, and Henry's conduct in connection with it, both before and after, still required an appearance of scrutiny. Not the least remarkable feature in the story is that the four knights had not been punished. They had not even been arrested. They had gone together, after leaving Canterbury, to De Morville's Castle of Knaresborough, but they had received no further molestation. It has been conjectured that

they owed their impunity to Becket's own claim for the exclusive jurisdiction of the spiritual courts in cases where spiritual persons were concerned; but in the protracted discussions on the Constitutions of Clarendon so obvious an inference would certainly have been brought to the surface on one side or the other, if ecclesiastical privilege had been ever understood to carry such extraordinary consequences.[1] The

[1] Canon Robertson shows from a letter of Archbishop Richard, Becket's successor, that although the crown had never recognized the custom, laymen who laid their hands on clerks had been practically subjected only to ecclesiastical punishments. 'I should be content,' the archbishop wrote, 'with the sentence of excommunication if it had the effect of striking terror into evil-doers; but through our sins it has become ineffective and despised. The slayers of a clerk or a bishop are sent to Rome by way of penance; they enjoy themselves by the way, and return with the pope's full grace, and with increased boldness for the commission of crime. *The king claims the right of punishing such offences*, and we deserve the consequences of our ambition in usurping a jurisdiction with which we have no rightful concern. . . . It is in the public interest that those should be restrained by the material sword who neither fear God nor dread the censure of the canons.' (*Life of Becket*, p. 82.) It is possible that as the law in England waited usually to be put in motion by the representatives of the injured parties, the clergy may have chosen generally to use their own weapons rather than appeal to the secular courts. But no English lawyer, I believe, considers that this reserved action of benefit of clergy was ever in fact practically admitted, or that a layman accused of murder escaped from justice by pleading that the person whom he had robbed or murdered was a clerk. The defence was not put forward as an excuse for Henry's neglect to punish the archbishop's murderers, and the apathy of the

explanation was that the king had acted honourably by taking the responsibility on himself, and had not condescended to shield his own reputation by the execution of men whose fault had been over-loyalty to himself. Elizabeth might have remembered with advantage the example of her ancestor when she punished Davidson, under circumstances not wholly dissimilar, for the execution of the Queen of Scots.

The king met the cardinals at Caen in the middle of May. At the first interview the difficulty was disposed of which was most immediately pressing, and arrangements were made for a repetition of the ceremony which had been the occasion of the excommunication of the bishops. Prince Henry and

authorities was clearly not interpreted at the time as due to a cause which if real would of course have been alleged.

'Ad haec quid fecerunt justitiarii praesidesve provinciarum vicecomites seu alii officiales regis vel habitatores regni omnes in pacem servandam jurati? Equidem illos sceleratos, illos paricidas, sacrilegos et praedones per stratam publicam diebus itinerantes impune abire dimiserunt ad propria et postea fere per annum in Angliâ commorati sunt ludentes in avibus coeli et canibus venaticis.'—*Materials*, vol. iv. p. 150.

This complaint would have been meaningless if in the Church's eyes the judges, sheriffs, and king's officers had no right to act in such cases. The curious part of the matter is that the bishops and clergy themselves were so little moved.

'Sed et hic episcoporum et cleri Angliae admiranda est negligentia. Nullus mutire ausus est; nullus fere ausus est parricidas illos excommunicare.'—*Ib.* vol. iv. p. 151.

the Princess Margaret were again crowned at Winchester on the 27th of August by the Archbishop of Rouen and the Bishops of Evreux and Worcester, the same prelates who had gone on the mission to Rome.

At Avranches on the 27th of September, at a second and more solemn assembly, the king confessed his guilt for the archbishop's death. He had not desired it, he said, and it had caused him the deepest sorrow; but he admitted that he had used words which the knights had naturally misconstrued. He attempted no palliation, and declared himself willing to endure any penalty which the cardinals might be pleased to impose.

The conditions with which the cardinals were satisfied implied an admission that in the original quarrel the right had lain with the king. All the miracles at Canterbury had made no difference in this essential point. The king promised to continue his support to Alexander as long as Alexander continued to recognize him as a Catholic sovereign—as long, that is, as he did not excommunicate him. He promised not to interfere with appeals to Rome in ecclesiastical causes, but with the reservation that if he had ground for suspecting an invasion of the rights of the Crown, he might take measures to

he said, would be found to be few or none. He pardoned Becket's friends; he restored the privileges and the estates of the see of Canterbury. For himself, he took the cross, with a vow to serve for three years in the Holy Land, unless the pope perceived that his presence was needed elsewhere. Meanwhile he promised to maintain two hundred Templars there for a year.

On these terms Henry was absolved. Geoffrey Ridel and John of Oxford, Becket's active opponents, whom he had twice cursed, were promoted to bishoprics. The four knights returned to the court, and, like their master, took the vows as Crusaders. The monastic chroniclers consign them to an early and miserable death. The industry of Dean Stanley has discovered them, two years after the murder, to have been again in attendance on the sovereign. Tracy became Justiciary of Normandy, and was at Falaise in 1174, when William the Lion did homage to Henry. De Morville, after a year's suspension, became again Justiciary of Northumberland. Fitzurse apparently chose Ireland as the scene of his penance. A Fitzurse was in the second flight of

Norman invaders, and was the founder of a family known to later history as the Macmahons, the Irish equivalent of the Son of the Bear.

But Henry was not yet delivered from the consequences of his contest with Becket, and the conspiracy which had been formed against him under the shelter of Becket's name was not to be dissolved by the spell of a papal absolution. Lewis of France had taken up Becket's cause, not that felonious clerks might go unhanged, but that an English king might not divide his own land with him. The Earl of Leicester had torn down Reginald of Cologne's altars, not alone because he was an orthodox Catholic, but that, with the help of ambitious ecclesiasticism, he might break the power of the Crown. Through France, through England, through Normandy, a combination had been formed for Henry's humiliation, and although the pope no longer sanctioned it, the purpose was deeply laid, and could not lightly be surrendered.

Unable to strike at his rival as a spiritual outlaw, Lewis found a point where he was no less vulnerable, in the jealousy of his queen and the ambition and pride of his sons. The aim of Lewis was to separate England from its French dependencies. He, and perhaps Eleanor, instigated Prince Henry to demand

other to him as an independent sovereign. The king of course refused. Prince Henry and his wife escaped to Lewis 'per consilium comitum et baronum Angliæ et Normanniæ qui patrem suum odio habebant.'[1] The young princes, Richard and Geoffrey, followed them; and a council was held at Paris, where the Count of Flanders, the Count of Boulogne, William the Lion, and the Earl of Huntingdon from Scotland, and the English and Norman disaffected nobles, combined with Lewis for a general attack upon the English king. England was to rise. Normandy was to rise. William was to invade Northumberland. The Count of Flanders was to assist the English insurgents in the eastern counties. Lewis himself was to lead an army into Normandy, where half the barons and bishops were ready to join him. The three English princes, embittered, it may be, by their mother's injuries, swore to make no peace with their father without consent of their allies.

For a time it seemed as if Henry must be overwhelmed. Open enemies were on all sides of him.

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[1] Benedict.

Of his professed friends too many were disloyal at heart. The Canterbury frenzy added fuel to the conflagration, by bringing God into the field. The Earl of Norfolk and Lord Ferrars rose in East Anglia. Lewis and young Henry crossed the frontier into Normandy. The Scots poured over the Tweed into Northumberland. Ireland caught the contagion uninvited; the greater part of the force which had remained there was recalled, and only a few garrisons were left. Had Alexander allowed the Church to lend its help, the king must have fallen; but Alexander honourably adhered to his engagement at Avranches.

The king himself remained on the continent, struggling as he best could against war and treason. Chief Justice de Luci and Humfrey de Bohun faced the Scots beyond Newcastle, and drove them back to Berwick. In the midst of their success they learned that the Earl of Leicester had landed in Norfolk with an army of Flemings. They left the north to its fate. They flew back. Lord Arundel joined them, and the old Earl of Cornwall, who befriended Becket while he could, but had no sympathy with rebellion. They fell on the Flemings near Bury St. Edmunds, and flung them into total wreck. Ten thousand were killed. Leicester himself and the

rest were taken, and scarce a man escaped to carry back the news to Gravelines.[1]

The victory in Norfolk was the first break in the cloud. The rebellion in England had its back broken, and waverers began to doubt, in spite of the miracles, whether God was on its side. Bad news, however, came from the north. The Scots flowed back, laying waste Cumberland and Northumberland with wild ferocity. At the opening of the summer of 1174 another army of French, Flemings, and insurgent English was collected at Gravelines to revenge the defeat at Bury, and this time the Earl of Flanders and Prince Henry were to come in person at the head of it.

An invasion so led and countenanced could only be resisted by the king in person. The barons had sworn allegiance to the prince, and the more loyal of them might be uncertain in what direction their duties lay. Sad and stern, prepared for the worst, yet resolute to contend to the last against the unnatural coalition, Henry crossed in July to Southampton; but, before repairing to London to collect his forces, he turned aside out of his road for a singular and touching purpose.

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[1] October 16, 1173

Although the conspiracy against which he was fighting was condemned by the pope, it had grown nevertheless too evidently out of the contest with Becket, which had ended so terribly. The combination of his wife and sons with his other enemies was something off the course of nature—strange, dark, and horrible. He was abler than most of his contemporaries, but his piety was (as with most wise men) a check upon his intellect. He, it is clear, did not share in the suspicion that the miracles at the archbishop's tomb were the work either of fraud or enchantment. He was not a person who for political reasons would affect emotions which he despised. He had been Becket's friend. Becket had been killed, in part at least, through Henry's fault; and, though he might still believe himself to have been essentially right in the quarrel, the miracles showed that the archbishop had been really a saint. A more complete expiation than the pope had enjoined might be necessary before the avenging spirit, too manifestly at work, could be pacified.

From Southampton he directed his way to Canterbury, where the bishops had been ordered to meet him. He presented offerings at the various churches which he passed on his way. On reaching Harbledown, outside the city, he alighted at the

hair penitential shirt, over which a coarse pilgrim's cloak was thrown; and in this costume, with bare and soon bleeding feet, Henry, King of England, Lord of Ireland, Duke of Normandy, and Count of Anjou, walked through the streets to the cathedral. Pausing at the spot where the archbishop had fallen, and kissing the stone, he descended into the crypt to the tomb, burst into tears, and flung himself on the ground. There surrounded by a group of bishops, knights, and monks, he remained long upon his knees in silent prayer. The Bishop of London said for him, what he had said himself at Avranches, that he had not commanded the murder, but had occasioned it by his hasty words. When the bishop ended, Henry rose, and repeated his confession with his own lips. He had caused the archbishop's death; therefore he had come in person to acknowledge his sin, and to entreat the brothers of the monastery to pray for him.

At the tomb he offered rich silks and wedges of gold. To the chapter he gave lands. For himself

[1] July 12.

he vowed to erect and endow a religious house, which should be dedicated to St. Thomas. Thus amply, in the opinion of the monks, *reconciliari meruit*, he deserved to be forgiven. But the satisfaction was still incomplete. The martyr's injuries, he said, must be avenged on his own person. He threw off his cloak, knelt again, and laid his head upon the tomb. Each bishop and abbot present struck him five times with a whip. Each one of the eighty monks struck him thrice. Strange scene! None can be found more characteristic of the age; none more characteristic of Henry Plantagenet.

The penance done, he rose and resumed his cloak; and there by the tomb through the remainder of the July day, and through the night till morning, he remained silently sitting, without food or sleep. The cathedral doors were left open by his orders. The people of the city came freely to gape and stare at the singular spectacle. There was the terrible King Henry, who had sent the knights to kill their archbishop, sitting now in dust and ashes. The most ingenious cunning could not have devised a better method of winning back the affection of his subjects; yet with no act of king or statesman had ingenious cunning ever less to do. In the morning he heard mass, and presented offerings at the various

altars. Then he became king once more, and rode to London to prepare for the invader. If his humiliation was an act of vain superstition, Providence encouraged him in his weakness. On the day which followed it William the Lion was defeated and made prisoner at Alnwick. A week later came news that the army at Gravelines had dissolved, and that the invasion was abandoned. Delivered from peril at home, Henry flew back to France and flung Lewis back over his own frontier. St. Thomas was now supposed to be fighting for King Henry. Imagination becomes reality when it gives to one party certainty of victory, to the other the anticipation of defeat. By the spring of 1175 the great combination was dissolved. The princes returned to their duty; the English and Norman rebels to their allegiance; and with Alexander's mediation Henry and Lewis and the Count of Flanders were for a time once more reconciled.

Though the formal canonization of Becket could not be accomplished with the speed which his impatient friends demanded, it was declared with the least delay which the necessary forms required. A commission which was sent from Rome to inquire into the authenticity of the miracles having reported satisfactorily, the promotion of the archbishop was

immediately decreed, and the monks were able to pray to him without fear of possible irregularity. Due honour having been thus paid to the Church's champion, it became possible to take up again the ever-pressing problem of the Church's reform.

Between the pope and the king there had never really been much difference of opinion. They were now able to work harmoniously together. A successor for Becket at Canterbury was found in the Prior of Dover, for whose good sense we have a sufficient guarantee in the abhorrence with which he was regarded by the ardent champions of Church supremacy. The reformation was commenced in Normandy. After the ceremony at Avranches the cardinals who had come from Rome to receive Henry's confession held a council there. The resolutions arrived at show that the picture of the condition of the clergy left to us by Nigellus is not really overdrawn. It was decided that children were to be no more admitted to the cure of souls—a sufficient proof that children had been so admitted. It was decided that the sons of priests should not succeed to their father's preferments—an evidence not only of the habits of the incumbents, but of the tendency of Church benefices to become hereditary.

Yet more significantly the guilty bargains were forbidden by which benefices were let out to farm, and lay patrons presented incumbents on condition of sharing the offertory money; while pluralist ecclesiastics, of whom Becket himself had been a conspicuous instance, were ordered to give a third, at least, of their tithes to the vicars. At the close of the war, in 1175, a similar council was held at Westminster under the new primate. Not only the Avranches resolutions were adopted there, but indications appeared that among the English clergy simony and licence were at a yet grosser point than on the Continent. Benefices had been publicly set up to sale. The religious houses received money for the admission of monks and nuns. Priests, and even bishops, had demanded fees for administration of the sacraments; while as regarded manners and morals, it was evident that the priestly character sat lightly on the secular clergy. They carried arms; they wore their hair long like laymen; they frequented taverns and more questionable places; the more reputable among them were sheriffs and magistrates. So far as decrees of a council could alter the inveterate habits of the order, a better state of things was attempted to be instituted. In the October following, Cardinal Hugezun came from

for which Henry pleaded seem at that time to have been partially recognized. Gross offenders were degraded by their ordinaries and passed over to the secular judges. For one particular class of offences definite statutory powers were conceded to the State. The clergy were notorious violators of the forest laws. Deer-stealing implied a readiness to commit other crimes, and Cardinal Hugezun formally consented that orders should be no protection in such cases. The betrayal of their interests on a matter which touched so nearly the occupation of their lives was received by the clergy with a scream of indignation. Their language on the occasion is an illustration of what may have been observed often, before and since, that no order of men are less respectful to spiritual authority when they disapprove its decrees.

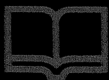
'The aforesaid cardinal,' wrote Benedict and Walter of Coventry, 'conceded to the king the right of impleading the clerks of his realm under the forest laws, and of punishing them for taking deer. Limb of Satan that he was! mercenary satellite of the devil himself! Of a shepherd he was made a robber. Seeing the wolf coming, he fled away and

have spared their passion. The laws of any country cannot be maintained above the level of the average intelligence of the people; and in another generation the clergy would be free to carry their cross-bows without danger of worse consequences than a broken crown from the staff of a gamekeeper. 'Archbishop Richard,' says Giraldus, 'basely surrendered the rights which the martyr Thomas had fought for and won, but Archbishop Stephen recovered them.' The blood of St. Thomas had not been shed, and the martyr of Canterbury had not been allowed a monopoly of wonder-working, that a priest should be forbidden to help himself to a haunch of venison on festival days. In the great Charter of English freedom the liberties of the Church were comprehended in the form, or almost in the form, in which Becket himself would have defined them. The barons paid for the support of the clergy on that memorable occasion by the concession of their most extravagant demands. Benefit of clergy thence-

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[1] 'Ecce membrum Satanæ! ecce ipsius Satanæ conductus satelles! qui tam subito factus de pastore raptor videns lupum venientem fugit et dimisit oves sibi a summo pontifice commissas.'





forward was permitted to throw an enchanted shield not round deer-stealers only, but round thieves and murderers, and finally round every villain that could read. The spiritual courts, under the name of liberty, were allowed to develope a system of tyranny and corruption unparalleled in the administrative annals of any time or country. The English laity were for three centuries condemned to writhe under the yoke which their own credulous folly had imposed on them, till the spirit of Henry II. at length revived, and the aged iniquity was brought to judgment at the Reformation.

THE OXFORD COUNTER-REFORMATION.[1]

[*GOOD WORDS. 1881.*]

LETTER I.

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND FIFTY YEARS AGO.

MY DEAR ——. You remind me of a promise which I have left too long unfulfilled. We had been looking over some of your old family papers, and we had found among them a copy of the once famous Tract 90, scored over with pencil marks and interjections. The rocket which had flamed across the sky was now a burnt-out case. It was hard to believe that the whole mind of England could have been so agitated by expressions and ideas which had since become so familiar. We were made to feel how times had changed in the last forty years; we had been travelling on a spiritual railroad,

[1] These letters were originally published before the appearance of Mr. Mozley's *Reminiscences of the Oxford Movement.* I have not found it necessary to make any alterations.

and the indifference with which we turned the leaves of the once-terrible pamphlet was an evidence how far we had left behind our old traditionary landmarks. Mysteries which had been dismissed as superstitions at the Reformation, and had never since been heard of, were now preached again by half the clergy, and had revolutionized the ritual in our churches. Every county had its Anglican monasteries and convents. Romanism had lifted up its head again. It had its hierarchy and its cardinals; it was a power in Parliament, and in the London salons. The fathers confessors were busy in our families, dictating conditions of marriages, dividing wives from husbands, and children from parents.

By the side of the revival of Catholicism there was a corresponding phenomenon of an opposite and no less startling kind. Half a century ago any one who openly questioned the truth of Christianity was treated as a public offender and was excommunicated by society. Now, while one set of men were bringing back mediævalism, science and criticism were assailing with impunity the authority of the Bible; miracles were declared impossible; even Theism itself was treated as an open question, and subjects which in our fathers' time were approached only with the deepest reverence and solemnity were dis-

cussed among the present generation with as much freedom as the common problems of natural philosophy or politics.

Both these movements began within a short distance of one another, and were evidently connected. You asked me to write down what I could recollect about their origin, having had, as you supposed, some special opportunities of knowing their history. I hesitated, partly because it is not agreeable to go back over our own past mistakes, partly because I have ceased to feel particular interest in either of them. For myself, I am convinced that they are roads both of them which lead to the wrong place, and that it is better for us to occupy ourselves with realities than fret our minds about illusions. If the Church of Rome recovers power enough to be dangerous, it will be shattered upon the same rocks on which it was dashed three centuries ago. The Church of England may play at sacerdotalism and masquerade in mediæval garniture; the clergy may flatter one another with notions that they can bind and loose the souls of their fellow-Christians, and transform the substance of the sacramental elements by spells and gestures; but they will not at this time of day persuade intelligent men that the bishops in their ordination gave them really supernatural powers. Their celebrations

and processions may amuse for a time by their novelty, but their pretensions deserve essentially no more respect than those of spirit-rappers, and the serious forces of the world go on upon their way no more affected by them than if they were shadows.

As little is it possible to hope much from the school of negative and scientific criticism. For what science can tell us of positive truth in special subjects we are infinitely thankful. In matters of religion it can say nothing, for it knows nothing. A surgeon may dissect a living body to discover what life consists in. The body is dead before he can reach the secret, and he can report only that the materials when he has taken them to pieces and examined them are merely dead matter. Critical philosophy is equally at a loss with Christianity. It may perhaps discover the doctrines of the creed in previously existing Eastern theologies. It may pretend to prove that the sacred records were composed as human narratives are composed; that the origin of many of them cannot be traced; that they are defective in authority; that the evidence is insufficient to justify a belief in the events which they relate. So far as philosophy can see, there may be nothing in the materials of Christianity which is necessarily and certainly supernatural. And yet Christianity exists,

and has existed, and has been the most powerful spiritual force which has ever been felt among mankind.

If I tell the story which you ask of me, therefore, I must tell it without sympathy, either way, in these great movements. I cannot, like 'the sow that was washed,' return to wallow in repudiated superstition. If I am to be edified, on the other hand, I must know what is true in religion; and I do not care about negations. In this respect I am unfit for the task which you impose on me. It is, perhaps, however, occasionally well to take stock of our mental experience. The last forty or fifty years will be memorable hereafter in the history of English opinion. The number of those who recollect the beginnings of the Oxford revival is shrinking fast; and such of us as survive may usefully note down their personal recollections as a contribution, so far as it goes, to the general narrative. It is pleasant too to recall the figures of those who played the chief parts in the drama. If they had not been men of ability they could not have produced the revolution that was brought about by them. Their personal characters were singularly interesting. Two of them were distinctly men of real genius. My own brother was at starting the foremost of the party; the flame,

therefore, naturally burnt hot in my own immediate environment. The phrases and formulas of Anglo-Catholicism had become household words in our family before I understood coherently what the stir and tumult was about.

We fancy that we are free agents. We are conscious of what we do; we are not conscious of the causes which make us do it; and therefore we imagine that the cause is in ourselves. The Oxford leaders believed that they were fighting against the spirit of the age. They were themselves most completely the creatures of their age. It was one of those periods when Conservative England had been seized with a passion for Reform. Parliament was to be reformed; the municipal institutions were to be reformed; there was to be an end of monopolies and privileges. The constitution was to be cut in pieces and boiled in the Benthamite caldron, from which it was to emerge in immortal youth. In a reformed State there needed a reformed Church. My brother and his friends abhorred Bentham and all his works. The Establishment in its existing state was too weak to do battle with the new enemy. Protestantism was the chrysalis of Liberalism. The Church, therefore, was to be unprotestantized. The Reformation, my brother said, was a bad setting of a broken limb.

My brother exaggerated the danger, and underestimated the strength which existing institutions and customs possess so long as they are left undisturbed. Before he and his friends undertook the process of reconstruction, the Church was perhaps in the healthiest condition which it had ever known. Of all the constituents of human society, an established religion is that which religious men themselves should most desire to be let alone, and which people in general when they are healthy-minded are most sensitive about allowing to be touched. It is the sanction of moral obligation. It gives authority to the commandments, creates a fear of doing wrong, and a sense of responsibility for doing it. To raise a doubt about a creed established by general acceptance is a direct injury to the general welfare. Discussion about it is out of place, for only bad men wish to question the rule of life which religion commands; and a creed or ritual is not a series of propositions or a set of outward observances of which the truth or fitness may be properly argued; it grows with the life of a race or nation; it takes shape as a living germ develops into an organic body; and as you do not ask of a tree, is it *true*, but

is it *alive*, so with an established Church or system of belief you look to the work which it is doing. If it is teaching men to be brave and upright, and honest and just, if it is making them noble-minded, careless of their selfish interests, and loving only what is good, the truth of it is proved by evidence better than argument, and idle persons may properly be prohibited from raising unprofitable questions about it. Where there is life, truth is present not as in propositions, but as an active force, and that is all which practical men need desire.

Thus in stern and serious ages, the religion of every country has been under the charge of the law; and to deny it has been treated as a crime. When the law has become relaxed, public opinion takes its place, and, though offenders are no longer punished, society excommunicates them. If religion were matter of speculation, they would be let alone; but so long as it is a principle of conduct, the common sense of mankind refuses to allow it to be trifled with.

Public opinion was in this sense the guardian of Christianity in England sixty years ago. Orthodox dissent was permitted. Doubts about the essentials of the faith were not permitted. In the last century, in certain circles of society, scepticism had for a time

always a reproach. The Church administration had been slovenly; but in the masses of the people the convictions which they had inherited were still present, and were blown into flame easily by the Methodist revival. The Establishment followed the example and grew energetic again. The French Revolution had frightened all classes out of advanced ways of thinking, and society in town and country was Tory in politics, and determined to allow no innovations upon the inherited faith. It was orthodox without being theological. Doctrinal problems were little thought of. Religion, as taught in the Church of England, meant moral obedience to the will of God. The speculative part of it was accepted because it was assumed to be true. The creeds were reverentially repeated; but the essential thing was practice. People went to church on Sunday to learn to be good, to hear the commandments repeated to them for the thousandth time, and to see them written in gilt letters over the communion-table. About the powers of the keys, the real presence, or the metaphysics of doctrine, no one was anxious, for no one thought about them. It was not worth while to waste time over questions which had

no bearing on conduct, and could be satisfactorily disposed of only by sensible indifference.

As the laity were, so were the clergy. They were generally of superior culture, manners, and character. The pastor in the 'Excursion' is a favourable but not an exceptional specimen of a large class among them. Others were country gentlemen of the best kind, continually in contact with the people, but associating on equal terms with the squires and the aristocracy. The curate of the last century, who dined in the servants' hall and married the ladies'-maid, had long disappeared, if he had ever existed outside popular novels. Not a specimen of him could have been found in the island. The average English incumbent of fifty years ago was a man of private fortune, the younger brother of the landlord perhaps, and holding the family living; or it might be the landlord himself, his adowson being part of the estate. His professional duties were his services on Sunday, funerals and weddings on week-days, and visits when needed among the sick. In other respects he lived like his neighbours, distinguished from them only by a black coat and white neckcloth, and greater watchfulness over his words and actions. He farmed his own glebe; he kept horses; he shot and hunted moderately,

and mixed in general society. He was generally a magistrate; he attended public meetings, and his education enabled him to take a leading part in county business. His wife and daughters looked after the poor, taught in the Sunday-school, and managed the penny clubs and clothing clubs. He himself was spoken of in the parish as 'the master'—the person who was responsible for keeping order there, and who knew how to keep it. The labourers and the farmers looked up to him. The 'family' in the great house could not look down upon him. If he was poor it was still his pride to bring up his sons as gentlemen; and economies were cheerfully submitted to at home to give them a start in life—at the university, or in the army or navy.

Our own household was a fair representative of the order. My father was rector of the parish. He was archdeacon, he was justice of the peace. He had a moderate fortune of his own, consisting chiefly in land, and he belonged, therefore, to the 'landed interest.' Most of the magistrates' work of the neighbourhood passed through his hands. If anything was amiss, it was his advice which was most sought after, and I remember his being called upon to lay a troublesome ghost. In his younger days he had been a hard rider across country. His

children knew him as a continually busy, useful man of the world, a learned and cultivated antiquary, and an accomplished artist. My brothers and I were excellently educated, and were sent to school and college. Our spiritual lessons did not go beyond the Catechism. We were told that our business in life was to work and to make an honourable position for ourselves. About doctrine, Evangelical or Catholic, I do not think that in my early boyhood I ever heard a single word, in church or out of it. The institution had drifted into the condition of what I should call moral health. It did not instruct us in mysteries, it did not teach us to make religion a special object of our thoughts; it taught us to use religion as a light by which to see our way along the road of duty. Without the sun our eyes would be of no use to us; but if we look *at* the sun we are simply dazzled, and can see neither it nor anything else. It is precisely the same with theological speculations. If the beacon lamp is shining a man of healthy mind will not discuss the composition of the flame. Enough if it shows him how to steer and keep clear of shoals and breakers. To this conception of the thing we had practically arrived. Doctrinal controversies were sleeping. People went to church because they liked it, because

they knew that they ought to go, and because it was the custom. They had received the Creeds from their fathers, and doubts about them had never crossed their minds. Christianity had wrought itself into the constitution of their natures. It was a necessary part of the existing order of the universe, as little to be debated about as the movements of the planets or the changes of the seasons.

Such the Church of England was in the country districts before the Tractarian movement. It was not perfect, but it was doing its work satisfactorily. It is easier to alter than to improve, and the beginning of change, like the beginning of strife, is like the letting out of water. Jupiter, in Lessing's fable, was invited to mend a fault in human nature. The fault was not denied, but Jupiter said that man was a piece of complicated machinery, and if he touched a part he might probably spoil the whole.

But a new era was upon us. The miraculous nineteenth century was coming of age, and all the world was to be remade. Widely as the improvers of their species differed as to the methods to be followed, they agreed in this, that improvement there was to be. The Radicals wanted to make an end of Toryism and antiquated ideas. Young Oxford discovered that if the Radicals were to be

fought with successfully the old weapons would not answer, and something was wanted 'deeper and truer than satisfied the last century.' Our English-speaking forefathers in the last century it seems were poor creatures, yet they had contrived to achieve considerable success in most departments of human affairs. They founded empires; they invented steam engines; they produced a Chatham, a Clive, a Warren Hastings, a Washington, a Franklin, a Nelson—a longer list of illustrious names than there is need to mention. Their literature might not equal the Elizabethan, but it was note-worthy in its way. A period which had produced Pope and Swift, Sterne and Fielding, Johnson and Goldsmith, Hume and Gibbon, Butler and Berkeley, was not so entirely shallow. Men had fixed beliefs in those days. Over the pool of uncertainties in which our own generation is floundering there was then a crust of undisturbed conviction on which they could plant their feet and step out like men. Their thoughts, if not deep, were clear and precise; their actions were bold and strong. A good many years, perhaps a good many hundreds of years, will have to pass before as sound books will be written again, or deeds done with as much pith and mettle in them. 'The something deeper and

truer' would be more easily desired than found, but the words well convey the inflation with which the Catholic revivalists were going to their work. Our age perhaps has a mistaken idea of its consequence. All its geese are swans, and every new enemy is a monster never before heard of. The 'Edinburgh Review' and Brougham, and Mackintosh and the Reform Ministry, and Low Church philosophy and the London University, were not so very terrible. But as the windmills were giants to the knight of La Mancha, so the Whigs of those days were to young Oxford apostles the forerunners of Antichrist. Infidelity was rushing in upon us. Achilles must rise from his tent, and put on his celestial armour. The Church must re-assert herself in majesty to smite and drive back the proud aggressive intellect.

The excitement was unnecessary. The sun was not extinguished because a cloud was over its face. Custom, tradition, conservative instinct, and natural reverence for the truth handed down to it, would have sufficed more than amply to meet such danger as then existed. In a little while 'The Edinburgh' became the most orthodox of journals, and Brougham an innocent apostle of natural theology. Liberalism let well alone would have subsided into its place.

But it was not so to be. Achilles was roused in his wrath; and the foe whom he was to destroy was roused in turn, and has not been destroyed. The two parties were the counterparts one of the other; each was possessed with the same conceit of superiority to their fathers and grandfathers; each in its way supposed that it had a mission to reconstruct society. The Radicals believed in the rights of man, the progress of the species, and intellectual emancipation. To them our ancestors were children, and the last-born generation were the ancient sages, for they had inherited the accumulated experience of all past time. Established institutions represented only ignorance. The older they were, the less fitted they were, from the nature of the case, for modern exigencies.

In talk of this kind there was one part sense and nine parts nonsense. The Oxford school confronted it with a position equally extravagant. In their opinion truth was to be found only in the earliest fathers of the Church; the nearer that we could reach back to them, the purer we should find the stream. The bottom of the mischief was the modern notion of liberty, the supposed right of men to think for themselves and act for themselves. Their business was to submit to authority, and the

seat of authority was the Church. The false idea had made its appearance in England first under the Plantagenet kings, in the Constitutions of Clarendon, the mortmain and premunire statutes. It had produced the Reformation, it had produced Puritanism and regicide. It now threatened the destruction of all that good men ought to value. The last century had been blind; our own fathers had been blind; but the terrible reality could no longer be concealed. The arch-enemy was at the door. The Test Act was repealed. Civil disabilities were taken off Dissenters. Brougham had announced that henceforth no man was to suffer for his religious opinions. Irish bishoprics were being suppressed. Lord Grey had warned the bishops in England to set their houses in order, and was said to have declared in private that the Church was a mare's nest. Catholic emancipation was equally monstrous. Romanists, according to the theory as it then stood, might be Churchmen abroad, but they were Dissenters in England and Ireland. War was to be declared at once, war to the knife, against the promoters of these enormities. History was reconstructed for us. I had learnt, like other Protestant children, that the pope was Antichrist, and that Gregory VII. had been a special revelation of that

being. I was now taught that Gregory VII. was a saint. I had been told to honour the Reformers. The Reformation became the great schism, Cranmer a traitor, and Latimer a vulgar ranter. Milton was a name of horror, and Charles I. was canonized and spoken of as the holy and blessed martyr St. Charles. I asked once whether the Church of England was able properly to create a saint. St. Charles was immediately pointed out to me. Similarly we were to admire the nonjurors, to speak of James III. instead of the Pretender; to look for Antichrist, not in the pope, but in Whigs and revolutionists and all their works. Henry of Exeter, so famous in those days, announced once in my hearing that the Court of Rome had regretted the Emancipation Act as a victory of latitudinarianism. I suppose he believed what he was saying.

Under the sad conditions of the modern world the Church of England was the rock of salvation. The Church, needing only to be purged of the elements of Protestantism which had stolen into her, could then, with her apostolic succession, her bishops, her priests, and her sacraments, rise up, and claim and exercise her lawful authority over all persons in all departments. She would have but to show herself in her proper majesty, as in the great days when she fought with kings and emperors

and now, as then, the powers of darkness would spread their wings and fly away to their own place.

These were the views which we used to hear in our home-circle when the Tracts were first beginning. We had been bred, all of us, Tories of the old school. This was Toryism in ecclesiastical costume. My brother was young, gifted, brilliant, and enthusiastic. No man is ever good for much who has not been carried off his feet by enthusiasm between twenty and thirty; but it needs to be bridled and bitted, and my brother did not live to be taught the difference between fact and speculation. Taught it he would have been, if time had been allowed him. No one ever recognized facts more loyally than he when once he saw them. This I am sure of, that when the intricacies of the situation pressed upon him, when it became clear to him that if his conception of the Church, and of its rights and position, was true at all, it was not true of the Church of England in which he was born, and that he must renounce his theory as visionary or join another communion, he would not have 'minimised' the Roman doctrines that they might be more easy for him to swallow, or have explained away plain propositions till they meant anything or nothing. Whether he would have swallowed them or not I

cannot say; I was not eighteen when he died, and I do not so much as form an opinion about it; but his course, whatever it was, would have been direct and straightforward; he was a man far more than a theologian; and if he had gone, he would have gone with his whole heart and conscience, unassisted by subtleties and nice distinctions. It is, however, at least equally possible that he would not have gone at all. He might have continued to believe that all authority was derived from God; that God would have His will obeyed in this world, and that the business of princes and ministers was to learn what that will was. But prophets have passed for something as well as priests in making God's will known; and Established Church priesthoods have not been generally on particularly good terms with prophets. The only occasion on which the two orders are said to have been in harmony was when the prophets prophesied lies, and the priests bore rule in their name.

The terminus, however, towards which he and his friends were moving had not come in sight in my brother's life-time. He went forward, hesitating at nothing, taking the fences as they came, passing lightly over them all, and sweeping his friends along with him. He had the contempt of an intellectual

aristocrat for private judgment and the rights of a man. In common things a person was a fool who preferred his own judgment to that of an expert. Why, he asked, should it be wiser to follow private judgment in religion? As to rights, the right of wisdom was to rule, and the right of ignorance was to be ruled. But he belonged himself to the class whose business was to order rather than obey. If his own bishop had interfered with him, his theory of episcopal authority would have been found inapplicable in that particular instance.

So the work went on. The Church was not to be a witness only to religious truth; it was first to repent of its sins, disown its Protestantism, and expel the Calvinistic poison; then it was to control politics and govern all opinion. Murmurs arose from time to time among the disciples. If the Reformation was to be called an act of schism, were we not on the road back to Rome? Shrewd observers were heard to say that the laity would never allow the Church of England to get on stilts. The Church was grafted on upon the State, and the State would remain master, let Oxford say what it pleased. But the party of the movement were to grow and fulfil their destiny. They were to produce results of incalculable consequence, yet results exactly

opposite to what they designed and anticipated. They were to tear up the fibres of custom by which the Establishment as they found it was maintaining its quiet influence. They were to raise discussions round its doctrines, which degraded accepted truths into debatable opinions. They were to alienate the conservative instincts of the country, fill the clergy once more with the conceit of a priesthood, and convert them into pilot fish for the Roman missionaries. Worst of all, by their attempts to identify Christianity with the Catholic system, they provoked doubts, in those whom they failed to persuade, about Christianity itself. But for the Oxford movement, scepticism might have continued a harmless speculation of a few philosophers. By their perverse alternative, either the Church or nothing, they forced honest men to say, Let it be nothing, then, rather than what we know to be a lie. A vague misgiving now saturates our popular literature; our lecture rooms and pulpits echo with it; and the Established religion, protected no longer from irreverent questions, is driven to battle for its existence among the common subjects of secular investigation. Truth will prevail in the end, and the trial, perhaps, must have come at one time or other. But it need not have come when it did. There might

have been peace in our days, if Achilles had remained in his tent.

You shall have the story of it all in the following letters.

LETTER II.

THE TRACTARIANS.

My dear ——. I have told you that the Tractarians' object, so far as they understood themselves, was to raise up the Church to resist the revolutionary tendency which they conceived to have set in with the Reform Bill; that the effect of their work was to break the back of the resisting power which the Church already possessed, and to feed the fire which they hoped to extinguish. I go on to explain in detail what I mean.

When I went into residence at Oxford my brother was no longer alive. He had been abroad almost entirely for three or four years before his death; and although the atmosphere at home was full of the new opinions, and I heard startling things from time to time on Transubstantiation and suchlike, he had little to do with my direct education. I had read at my own discretion in my father's library. My own

small judgment had been satisfied by Newton that the Pope was the Man of Sin; and Davison, to whom I was sent for a correction, had not removed the impression. I knew the 'Fairy Queen' pretty well, and had understood who and what was meant by the False Duessa. I read Sharon Turner carefully, and also Gibbon, and had thus unconsciously been swallowing antidotes to Catholic doctrine. Of evangelical books properly so called I had seen nothing. Dissent in all its forms was a crime in our house. My father was too solid a man to be carried off his feet by the Oxford enthusiasm, but he was a High Churchman of the old school. The Church itself he regarded as part of the constitution; and the Prayer-book as an Act of Parliament which only folly or disloyalty could quarrel with. My brother's notion of the evangelical clergy in the Establishment must have been taken from some unfortunate specimens. He used to speak of them as 'fellows who turned up the whites of their eyes, and said *Lawd.*' We had no copy of the 'Pilgrim's Progress' in the house. I never read it till after I had grown up, and I am sorry that I did not make earlier acquaintance with it. Speculations about the Church and the sacraments went into my head, but never much into my heart; and I fancy, perhaps idly, that I might have

escaped some trials and some misfortunes if my spiritual imagination had been allowed food which would have agreed with it.

In my first term at the university, the controversial fires were beginning to blaze, but not as yet hotly. The authorities had not taken the alarm, but there was much talk and excitement, and neither the education nor the discipline of the place was benefited by it. The attention of the heads and tutors was called off from their proper business. The serious undergraduates divided into parties, and the measure with which they estimated one another's abilities was not knowledge or industry, but the opinions which they severally held. The neo-Catholic youths thought themselves especially clever, and regarded Low Churchmen and Liberals as fools. It was unfortunate, for the state of Oxford was crying out for reform of a different kind. The scheme of teaching for the higher class of men was essentially good, perhaps as good as it could be made; incomparably better than the universal knowledge methods which have taken its place. But the idle or dull man had no education at all. His three or four years were spent in forgetting what he had learnt at school. The degree examination was got over by a *memoria technica*, and three months' cram

with a private tutor. We did pretty much what we liked. There was much dissipation, and the whole manner of life was needlessly extravagant. We were turned loose at eighteen, pleasures tempting us on all sides, the expense of indulgence being the only obstacle; and the expense for the first year or two was kept out of sight by the eagerness of the tradesmen to give us credit. No dean or tutor ever volunteered to help our inexperience. The prices which we paid for everything were preposterous. The cost of living might have been reduced to half what it was if the college authorities would have supplied the students on the co-operative system. But they would take no trouble, and their own charges were on the same extravagant scale. The wretched novice was an object of general plunder till he had learnt how to take care of himself. I remember calculating that I could have lived at a boarding-house on contract, with every luxury which I had in college, at a reduction of fifty per cent. In all this there was room and to spare for reforming energy, and it may be said that the administration of the university was the immediate business of the leading members—a business, indeed a duty, much more immediate than the unprotestantizing of the Church of England. But there was no leisure, there

was not even a visible desire to meddle with concerns so vulgar. Famous as the Tractarian leaders were to become, their names are not connected with a single effort to improve the teaching at Oxford or to mend its manners. Behind the larger conflict which they raised, that duty was left untouched for many years; it was taken up ultimately by the despised Liberals, who have not done it well, but have at least accomplished something, and have won the credit which was left imprudently within their reach.

The state of things which I found on coming up was, thus, not favourable to the proper work of the place. In general there was far too little intercourse between the elder and the younger men. The difference of age was not really very great, but they seldom met, except in lecture-rooms. If an undergraduate now and then breakfasted with his tutor, the undergraduate was shy, and the tutor was obliged to maintain by distance and dignity of manner the superiority which he might have forfeited if he allowed himself to be easy and natural. I myself, for my brother's sake, was in some degree an exception. I saw something from the first of the men of whom the world was talking. I might have seen more, but I did not make the most of my oppor-

tunities. I wished to be a disciple. I thought I was a disciple. But somehow I could never feel in my heart that what they were about was of the importance which it seemed to be, and I was little more than a curious and interested spectator.

Nor, with two exceptions, were the chiefs of the movement personally impressive to me. Isaac Williams I had known as a boy. He was an early friend of my brother's, and spent a vacation or two at my father's house before I went to school. His black brilliant eyes, his genial laugh, the skill and heartiness with which he threw himself into our childish amusements, the inexhaustible stock of stories with which he held us spell-bound for hours, had endeared him to every one of us; and at Oxford to dine now and then with four or five others in Williams's rooms was still one of the greatest pleasures which I had. He was serious, but never painfully so; and though his thoughts ran almost entirely in theological channels, they rose out of the soil of his own mind, pure and sparkling as the water from a mountain spring. He was a poet, too, and now and then could rise into airy sweeps of really high imagination. There is an image in the 'Baptistery' describing the relations between the actions of men here in this world and the eternity

which lies before them, grander than the finest of Keble's, or even of Wordsworth's:

Ice-chained in its headlong tract
Have I seen a cataract,
All throughout a wintry noon,
Hanging in the silent moon;
All throughout a sunbright even,
Like the sapphire gate of Heaven;
Spray, and wave, and drippings frore,
For a hundred feet and more
Caught in air, there to remain
Bound in winter's crystal chain.
All above still silent sleeps,
While in the transparent deeps,
Far below the current creeps.
Thus, methought, men's actions here,
In their headlong full career,
Were passing into adamant;
Hopes and fears, love, hate, and want,
And the thoughts, like shining spray,
Which above their pathway play,
Standing in the eye of day,
In the changeless heavenly noon,
Things done here beneath the moon.

Fault may be found with the execution in this passage, but the conception is poetry of the very highest order. But Williams was of quiet, unobtrusive spirit. He had neither the confidence nor the commanding nature which could have formed or led a party. The triumvirs who became a national force, and gave its real character to the Oxford movement, were Keble, Pusey, and John Henry Newman.

Newman himself was the moving power; the two others were powers also, but of inferior mental strength. Without the third, they would have been known as men of genius and learning; but their personal influence would have been limited to and have ended with themselves. Of Pusey I knew but little, and need not do more than mention him. Of Keble I can only venture to say a few words.

He had left residence at the time I speak of, but the 'Christian Year' had made him famous. He was often in Oxford as Professor of Poetry, and I was allowed to see him. Cardinal Newman has alluded in his 'Apologia' to the reverence which was felt for Keble. He is now an acknowledged Saint of the English Church, admired and respected even by those who disagree with his theology. A college has been founded in commemoration of him which bears his name; and the 'Christian Year' itself has passed through more than a hundred editions, and is a household word in every family of the Anglican Episcopal communion, both at home and in America. It seems presumptuous to raise a doubt about the fitness of a recognition so marked and so universal. But the question is not of Keble's piety or genuineness of character. Both are established beyond the reach of cavil, and it would be

absurd and ungracious to depreciate them. The intellectual and literary quality of his work, however, is a fair subject of criticism; and I am heretical enough to believe that, although the 'Christian Year' will always hold a high place in religious poetry, it owes its extraordinary popularity to temporary and accidental causes. Books which are immediately successful, are those which catch and reflect the passing tones of opinion—all-absorbing while they last, but from their nature subject to change. The mass of men know little of other times or other ways of thinking than their own. Their minds are formed by the conditions of the present hour. Their greatest man is he who for the moment expresses most completely their own sentiments, and represents human life to them from their own point of view. The point of view shifts, conditions alter, fashions succeed fashions, and opinions opinions; and having ourselves lost the clue, we read the writings which delighted our great-grandfathers with wonder at their taste. Each generation produces its own prophets, and great contemporary fame, except in a few extraordinary instances, is revenged by an undeserved completeness of neglect.

Very different in general is the reception of the works of true genius. A few persons appreciate

them from the first. To the many they seem flavourless and colourless, deficient in all the qualities which for the moment are most admired. They pass unnoticed amidst the meteors by which they are surrounded and eclipsed. But the meteors pass and they remain, and are seen gradually to be no vanishing coruscations, but new fixed stars, sources of genuine light, shining serenely for ever in the intellectual sky. They link the ages one to another in a common humanity. Virgil and Horace lived nearly two thousand years ago, and belonged to a society of which the outward form and fashion have utterly perished. But Virgil and Horace do not grow old, because while society changes men continue, and we recognize in reading them that the same heart beat under the toga which we feel in our own breasts. In the Roman Empire, too, there were contemporary popularities; men who were worshipped as gods, whose lightest word was treasured as a precious jewel—on whose breath millions hung expectant, who had temples built in their honour, who in their day were a power in the world. These are gone, while Horace remains—gone, dwindled into shadows. They were men, perhaps, of real worth, though of less than their admirers supposed, and they are now laughed at and moralized over in

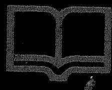
were sold in five years than of 'Hamlet' in two hundred. Yet 'Hamlet' will last as long as the 'Iliad;' 'Pickwick,' delightful as it is to us, will be unreadable to our great-grandchildren. The most genial caricature ceases to interest when the thing caricatured has ceased to be.

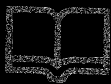
I am not comparing the 'Christian Year' to Pickwick, but there are fashions in religion as there are fashions in other things. The Puritans would have found it in the savour of the mystic Babylon. We cannot tell what English thought will be on these subjects in another century, but we may know if we are modest that it will not be identical with ours. Keble has made himself a name in history which will not be forgotten, and he will be remembered always as a person of singular piety, of inflexible integrity, and entire indifference to what is called fame or worldly advantages. He possessed besides, in an exceptional degree, the gift of expressing himself in the musical form which is called poetical. It is a form into which human thought naturally throws itself when it becomes emotional. It is the only form adequate to the expression of high intellectual passions. However powerful the

intellect, however generous the heart, this particular faculty can alone convey to others what is passing in them, or give to spiritual beauty a body which is beautiful also. The poetic faculty thus secures to those who have it the admiration of every person; but it is to be remembered also that if the highest things can alone be fitly spoken of in poetry, all poetry is not necessarily of the highest things; and if it can rise to the grandest subjects, it can lend its beauty also to the most commonplace. The prima donna wields the spell of an enchantress, though the words which she utters are nonsense; and poetry can make diamonds out of glass, and gold out of ordinary metal. Keble was a representative of the devout mind of England. Religion, as he grew to manhood, was becoming self-conscious. It was passing out of its normal and healthy condition as the authoritative teacher of obedience to the commandments, into active anxiety about the speculative doctrines on which its graces were held to depend. Here, as in all other directions, the mental activity of the age was making itself felt. The evangelical movement was one symptom of it. The revival of sacramentalism was another, and found a voice in Keble. But this is all. We look in vain to him for any insight into the complicated problems of

Prayer-book for his guide, he has provided us with a manual of religious sentiment corresponding to the Christian theory as taught by the Church of England Prayer-book, beautifully expressed in language which every one can understand and remember. High Churchmanship had been hitherto dry and formal; Keble carried into it the emotions of Evangelicalism, while he avoided angry collision with Evangelical opinions. Thus all parties could find much to admire in him, and little to suspect. English religious poetry was generally weak—was not, indeed, poetry at all. Here was something which in its kind was excellent; and every one who was really religious, or wished to be religious, or even outwardly and from habit professed himself and believed himself to be a Christian, found Keble's verses chime in his heart like church bells.

The 'Christian Year,' however, could be all this, and yet notwithstanding it could be poetry of a particular period, and not for all time. Human nature remains the same; but religion alters. Christianity has taken many forms. In the early Church it had the hues of a hundred heresies. It





developed in the successive councils. It has been Roman, it has been Greek, it has been Anglican, Lutheran, Calvinist, Arminian. It has adjusted itself to national characteristics; it has grown with the growth of general knowledge. Keble himself, in his latest edition, is found keeping pace with the progress of the times, and announcing that the hand as well as the heart receives the mystic presence in the Eucharist. He began to write for Church people as they were sixty years ago. The Church of England has travelled far since 1820. The 'Highest' rector then alive would have gone into convulsions if his curate had spoken to him about 'celebrating' mass. The most advanced Biblical critic would have closed the Speaker's Commentary with dismay or indignation. Changed opinions will bring change of feelings, and fresh poets to set the feelings to music. The 'Christian Year' has reigned without a rival through two generations, but 'the rhymes' are not of the powerful sort which will 'outlive the Pyramids,' and the qualities which have given them their immediate influence will equally forbid their immortality.

The limitations of Keble's poetry were visible in a still higher degree in himself. He was not far-seeing, his mind moved in the groove of a single

order of ideas. He could not place himself in the position of persons who disagreed with him, and thus he could never see the strong points of their arguments. Particular ways of thinking he dismissed as wicked, although in his summary condemnation he might be striking some of the ablest and most honest men in Europe. If he had not been Keble he would have been called (treason though it be to write the words) narrow-minded. Circumstances independent of himself could alone have raised him into a leader of a party. For the more delicate functions of such an office he was constitutionally unfit, and when appealed to for advice and assistance by disciples who were in difficulties his answers were beside the purpose. He could not give to others what he did not himself possess. Plato, in the Dialogue of the Io, describes an ingenious young Athenian searching desperately for some one who would teach him to be wise. Failing elsewhere he goes to the poets. Those, he thought, who could say such fine things in their verses would be able to tell him in prose what wisdom consisted in. Their conversation unfortunately proved as profitless as that of the philosophers; and the youth concluded that the poetry came from divine inspiration, and that when off the sacred tripod they were

but common men. Disappointment could not chill the admiration which the inquirer would continue to feel for so venerable a teacher as Keble, but of practical light that would be useful to him he often gathered as little as the Athenian. Even as a poet Keble was subjective only. He had no variety of note, and nothing which was not in harmony with his own theological school had intellectual interest for him.

To his immediate friends he was genial, affectionate, and possibly instructive, but he had no faculty for winning the unconverted. If he was not bigoted he was intensely prejudiced. If you did not agree with him there was something morally wrong with you, and your 'natural man' was provoked into resistance. To speak habitually with authority does not necessarily indicate an absence of humility, but does not encourage the growth of that quality. If there had been no 'movement,' as it was called, if Keble had remained a quiet country clergyman, unconscious that he was a great man, and uncalled on to guide the opinions of his age, he would have commanded perhaps more enduring admiration. The knot of followers who specially attached themselves to him, show traces of his influence in a disposition not only to think the views which they

hold sound in themselves, but to regard those who think differently as their intellectual inferiors. Keble was incapable of vanity in the vulgar sense. But there was a subtle self-sufficiency in him which has come out more distinctly in his school.

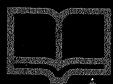
I remember an instance of Keble's narrowness extremely characteristic of him. A member of a family with which he had been intimate had adopted Liberal opinions in theology. Keble probably did not know what those opinions were, but regarded this person as an apostate who had sinned against light. He came to call one day when the erring brother happened to be at home; and learning that he was in the house, he refused to enter, and remained sitting in the porch. St. John is reported to have fled out of a bath at Ephesus on hearing that the heretic Cerinthus was under the roof. Keble, I presume, remembered the story, and acted like the apostle.

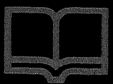
The inability to appreciate the force of arguments which he did not like saved him from Rome, but did not save him from Roman doctrine. It would, perhaps, have been better if he had left the Church of England, instead of remaining there to shelter behind his high authority a revolution in its teaching. The mass has crept back among us. with

which we thought we had done for ever, and the honourable name of Protestant, once our proudest distinction, has been made over to the Church of Scotland and the Dissenters.

Far different from Keble, from my brother, from Dr. Pusey, from all the rest, was the true chief of the Catholic revival—John Henry Newman. Compared with him, they were all but as ciphers, and he the indicating number. The times I speak of are far distant; the actors and the stormy passions which bubbled round them are long dead and forgotten among new excitements. Newman, too, for many years had dropped silent, and disappeared from the world's eyes. He came out again in a conflict with a dear friend of mine, who, on my account partly (at least, in reviewing a book which I had written), provoked a contest with him, and *impar congressus Achilli* seemed to have been foiled. Charles Kingsley is gone from us. English readers know now what he was, and from me or from any one he needs no further panegyric. In that one instance he conducted his case unskilfully. He was wrong in his estimate of the character of his antagonist, whose integrity was as unblemished as his own. But the last word has still to be spoken on the essential question which was at issue between them.

own life and actions, and next of the Catholic cause. The writer of it is again a power in modern society; a prince of the Church; surrounded, if he appears in public, with adoring crowds, fine ladies going on their knees before him in London salons. Himself of most modest nature, he never sought greatness, but greatness found him in spite of himself. To him, if to any one man, the world owes the intellectual recovery of Romanism. Fifty years ago it was in England a dying creed, lingering in retirement in the halls and chapels of a few half-forgotten families. A shy Oxford student has come out on its behalf into the field of controversy, armed with the keenest weapons of modern learning and philosophy; and wins illustrious converts, and has kindled hopes that England herself, the England of Elizabeth and Cromwell, will kneel for absolution again before the father of Christendom. Mr. Buckle questioned whether any great work has ever been done in this world by an individual man. Newman, by the solitary force of his own mind, has produced this extraordinary change. What he has done we will see; what will come of it our children will see. Of the magnitude of the phenomenon itself no reason-





able person can doubt. Two writers have affected powerfully the present generation of Englishmen. Newman is one, Thomas Carlyle is the other. But Carlyle has been at issue with all the tendencies of his age. Like a John the Baptist, he has stood alone preaching repentance in a world which is to him a wilderness. Newman has been the voice of the intellectual reaction of Europe, which was alarmed by an era of revolutions, and is looking for safety in the forsaken beliefs of the ages which it had been tempted to despise.

The 'Apologia' is the most beautiful of autobiographies, but it tells us only how the writer appeared to himself. We who were his contemporaries can alone say how he appeared to us in the old days at Oxford.

LETTER III.

JOHN HENRY NEWMAN.

My dear ——. My present letter will be given to a single figure. When I entered at Oxford, John Henry Newman was beginning to be famous. The responsible authorities were watching him with anxiety; clever men were looking with interest and

curiosity on the apparition among them of one of those persons of indisputable genius who was likely to make a mark upon his time. His appearance was striking. He was above the middle height, slight and spare. His head was large, his face remarkably like that of Julius Cæsar. The forehead, the shape of the ears and nose, were almost the same. The lines of the mouth were very peculiar, and I should say exactly the same. I have often thought of the resemblance, and believed that it extended to the temperament. In both there was an original force of character which refused to be moulded by circumstances, which was to make its own way, and become a power in the world; a clearness of intellectual perception, a disdain for conventionalities, a temper imperious and wilful, but along with it a most attaching gentleness, sweetness, singleness of heart and purpose. Both were formed by nature to command others, both had the faculty of attracting to themselves the passionate devotion of their friends and followers, and in both cases, too, perhaps the devotion was rather due to the personal ascendency of the leader than to the cause which he represented. It was Cæsar, not the principle of the empire, which overthrew Pompey and the constitution. *Credo in Newmannum* was a common phrase at Oxford, and

is still unconsciously the faith of nine-tenths of the English converts to Rome.

When I first saw him he had written his book upon the Arians. An accidental application had set him upon it, at a time, I believe, when he had half resolved to give himself to science and mathematics, and had so determined him into a theological career. He had published a volume or two of parochial sermons. A few short poems of his had also appeared in the 'British Magazine' under the signature of 'Delta,' which were reprinted in the 'Lyra Apostolica.' They were unlike any other religious poetry which was then extant. It was hard to say why they were so fascinating. They had none of the musical grace of the 'Christian Year.' They were not harmonious; the metre halted, the rhymes were irregular, yet there was something in them which seized the attention, and would not let it go. Keble's verses flowed in soft cadence over the mind, delightful, as sweet sounds are delightful, but are forgotten as the vibrations die away. Newman's had pierced into the heart and mind, and there remained. The literary critics of the day were puzzled. They saw that he was not an ordinary man; what sort of an extraordinary man he was they could not tell. 'The eye of Melpomene has

been cast upon him,' said the omniscient (I think) 'Athenæum';[1] 'but the glance was not fixed or steady.' The eye of Melpomene had extremely little to do in the matter. Here were thoughts like no other man's thoughts, and emotions like no other man's emotions. Here was a man who really believed his creed, and let it follow him into all his observations upon outward things. He had been travelling in Greece; he had carried with him his recollections of Thucydides, and while his companions were sketching olive gardens and old castles and picturesque harbours at Corfu, Newman was recalling the scenes which those harbours had witnessed thousands of years ago in the civil wars which the Greek historian has made immortal. There was nothing in this that was unusual. Any one with a well-stored memory is affected by historical scenery. But Newman was oppressed with the sense that the men who had fallen in that desperate strife were still alive, as much as he and his friends were alive.

> Their spirits live in awful singleness,

he says,

> Each in its self-formed sphere of light or gloom.

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[1] Perhaps it was not the *Athenæum*. I quote from memory. I remember the passage from the amusement which it gave me; but it was between forty and fifty years ago, and I have never seen it since.

We should all, perhaps, have acknowledged this in words. It is happy for us that we do not all realize what the words mean. The minds of most of us would break under the strain.

Other conventional beliefs, too, were quickened into startling realities. We had been hearing much in those days about the benevolence of the Supreme Being, and our corresponding obligation to charity and philanthropy. If the received creed was true, benevolence was by no means the only characteristic of that Being. What God loved we might love; but there were things which God did not love; accordingly we found Newman saying to us—

> Christian, would'st thou learn to love?
> First learn thee how to hate.
> . . . . .
> Hatred of sin and zeal and fear
> Lead up the Holy Hill;
> Track them, till charity appear
> A self-denial still.

It was not austerity that made him speak so. No one was more essentially tender-hearted. But he took the usually accepted Christian account of man and his destiny to be literally true, and the terrible character of it weighed upon him.

> Sunt lacrymæ rerum et mentem mortalia tangunt.

He could be gentle enough in other moods. 'Lead,

can here meet on common ground and join in a common prayer. Familiar as the lines are, they may here be written down once more:—

Lead, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom
    Lead Thou me on.
The night is dark, and I am far from home,
    Lead Thou me on.
Keep Thou my feet; I do not ask to see
Far distant scenes—one step enough for me.

I was not ever thus, nor prayed that Thou
    Should'st lead me on.
I loved to choose and see my path; but now
    Lead Thou me on.
I loved the garish day, and, spite of fears,
Pride ruled my will. Remember not past years

So long Thy power hath blest us, sure it will
    Still lead us on,
O'er moor and fen, o'er crag and torrent, till
    The night is gone,
And with the morn those angel faces smile
Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile.

It has been said that men of letters are either much less or much greater than their writings. Cleverness and the skilful use of other people's thoughts produce works which take us in till we see the authors, and then we are disenchanted. A man of genius, on the other hand, is a spring in

which there is always more behind than flows from it. The painting or the poem is but a part of him inadequately realized, and his nature expresses itself, with equal or fuller completeness, in his life, his conversation, and personal presence. This was eminently true of Newman. Greatly as his poetry had struck me, he was himself all that the poetry was, and something far beyond. I had then never seen so impressive a person. I met him now and then in private; I attended his church and heard him preach Sunday after Sunday; he is supposed to have been insidious, to have led his disciples on to conclusions to which he designed to bring them, while his purpose was carefully veiled. He was, on the contrary, the most transparent of men. He told us what he believed to be true. He did not know where it would carry him. No one who has ever risen to any great height in this world refuses to move till he knows where he is going. He is impelled in each step which he takes by a force within himself. He satisfies himself only that the step is a right one, and he leaves the rest to Providence. Newman's mind was world-wide. He was interested in everything which was going on in science, in politics, in literature. Nothing was too large for him, nothing too trivial, if it threw light

upon the central question, what man really was, and what was his destiny. He was careless about his personal prospects. He had no ambition to make a career, or to rise to rank and power. Still less had pleasure any seductions for him. His natural temperament was bright and light; his senses, even the commonest, were exceptionally delicate. I was told that, though he rarely drank wine, he was trusted to choose the vintages for the college cellar. He could admire enthusiastically any greatness of action and character, however remote the sphere of it from his own. Gurwood's 'Dispatches of the Duke of Wellington' came out just then. Newman had been reading the book, and a friend asked him what he thought of it. 'Think?' he said, 'it makes one burn to have been a soldier.' But his own subject was the absorbing interest with him. Where Christianity is a real belief, where there are distinct convictions that a man's own self and the millions of human beings who are playing on the earth's surface are the objects of a supernatural dispensation, and are on the road to heaven or hell, the most powerful mind may well be startled at the aspect of things. If Christianity was true, since Christianity was true (for Newman at no time doubted the reality of the revelation), then modern

England, modern Europe, with its march of intellect and its useful knowledge and its material progress, was advancing with a light heart into ominous conditions. Keble had looked into no lines of thought but his own. Newman had read omnivorously; he had studied modern thought and modern life in all its forms, and with all its many-coloured passions. He knew, of course, that many men of learning and ability believed that Christianity was not a revelation at all, but had been thrown out, like other creeds, in the growth of the human mind. He knew that doubts of this kind were the inevitable results of free discussion and free toleration of differences of opinion; and he was too candid to attribute such doubts, as others did, to wickedness of heart. He could not, being what he was, acquiesce in the established religion as he would acquiesce in the law of the land, because it was there, and because the country had accepted it, and because good general reasons could be given for assuming it to be right. The soundest arguments, even the arguments of Bishop Butler himself, went no farther than to establish a probability. But religion with Newman was a personal thing between himself and his Maker, and it was not possible to feel love and devotion to a Being whose existence was merely

probable. As Carlyle says of himself when in a similar condition, a religion which was not a certainty was a mockery and a horror; and unshaken and unshakable as his own convictions were, Newman evidently was early at a loss for the intellectual grounds on which the claims of Christianity to abstract belief could be based. The Protestant was satisfied with the Bible, the original text of which, and perhaps the English translation, he regarded as inspired. But the inspiration itself was an assumption, and had to be proved; and Newman, though he believed the inspiration, seems to have recognized earlier than most of his contemporaries that the Bible was not a single book, but a national literature, produced at intervals, during many hundred years, and under endless varieties of circumstances. Protestant and Catholic alike appealed to it, and they could not both be right. Yet if the differences between them were essential, there must be some authority capable of deciding between them. The Anglican Church had a special theology of its own, professing to be based on the Bible. Yet to suppose that each individual left to himself would gather out of the Bible, if able and conscientious, exactly these opinions and no others, was absurd and contrary to experience. There were the creeds; but

on what authority did the creeds rest? On the four councils? or on other councils, and, if other, on which? Was it on the Church? and, if so, on what Church? The Church of the Fathers? or the Church still present and alive and speaking? If for living men, among whom new questions were perpetually rising, a Church which was also living could not be dispensed with, then what was that Church, and to what conclusions would such an admission lead us?

With us undergraduates Newman, of course, did not enter on such important questions, although they were in the air, and we talked about them among ourselves. He, when we met him, spoke to us about subjects of the day, of literature, of public persons and incidents, of everything which was generally interesting. He seemed always to be better informed on common topics of conversation than any one else who was present. He was never condescending with us, never didactic or authoritative; but what he said carried conviction along with it. When we were wrong he knew why we were wrong, and excused our mistakes to ourselves while he set us right. Perhaps his supreme merit as a talker was that he never tried to be witty or to say striking things. Ironical he could be, but not ill-natured. Not a malicious anecdote was ever heard from him.

Prosy he could not be. He was lightness itself—the lightness of elastic strength—and he was interesting because he never talked for talking's sake, but because he had something real to say.

Thus it was that we, who had never seen such another man, and to whom he appeared, perhaps, at special advantage in contrast with the normal college don, came to regard Newman with the affection of pupils (though pupils, strictly speaking, he had none) for an idolized master. The simplest word which dropped from him was treasured as if it had been an intellectual diamond. For hundreds of young men *Credo in Newmannum* was the genuine symbol of faith.

Personal admiration, of course, inclined us to look to him as a guide in matters of religion. No one who heard his sermons in those days can ever forget them. They were seldom directly theological. We had theology enough and to spare from the select preachers before the university. Newman, taking some Scripture character for a text, spoke to us about ourselves, our temptations, our experiences. His illustrations were inexhaustible. He seemed to be addressing the most secret consciousness of each of us—as the eyes of a portrait appear to look at every person in a room. He never exaggerated; he was never unreal. A sermon from

him was a poem, formed on a distinct idea, fascinating by its subtlety, welcome—how welcome!—from its sincerity, interesting from its originality, even to those who were careless of religion; and to others who wished to be religious, but had found religion dry and wearisome, it was like the springing of a fountain out of the rock.

The hearts of men vibrate in answer to one another like the strings of musical instruments. These sermons were, I suppose, the records of Newman's own mental experience. They appear to me to be the outcome of continued meditation upon his fellow-creatures and their position in this world; their awful responsibilities; the mystery of their nature, strangely mixed of good and evil, of strength and weakness. A tone, not of fear, but of infinite pity runs through them all, and along with it a resolution to look facts in the face; not to fly to evasive generalities about infinite mercy and benevolence, but to examine what revelation really has added to our knowledge, either of what we are or of what lies before us. We were met on all sides with difficulties; for experience did not confirm, it rather contradicted, what revelation appeared distinctly to assert. I recollect a sermon from him—I think in the year 1839—I have never read it

since; I may not now remember the exact words, but the impression left is ineffaceable. It was on the trials of faith, of which he gave different illustrations. He supposed, first, two children to be educated together, of similar temperament and under similar conditions, one of whom was baptized and the other unbaptized. He represented them as growing up equally amiable, equally upright, equally reverent and God-fearing, with no outward evidence that one was in a different spiritual condition from the other; yet we were required to believe, not only that their condition was totally different, but that one was a child of God, and his companion was not.

Again, he drew a sketch of the average men and women who made up society, whom we ourselves encountered in daily life, or were connected with, or read about in newspapers. They were neither special saints nor special sinners. Religious men had faults, and often serious ones. Men careless of religion were often amiable in private life—good husbands, good fathers, steady friends, in public honourable, brave, and patriotic. Even in the worst and wickedest, in a witch of Endor, there was a human heart and human tenderness. None seemed good enough for heaven, none so bad as to deserve to be consigned to the company of evil spirits, and

to remain in pain and misery for ever. Yet all these people were, in fact, divided one from the other by an invisible line of separation. If they were to die on the spot as they actually were, some would be saved, the rest would be lost—the saved to have eternity of happiness, the lost to be with the devils in hell.

Again, I am not sure whether it was on the same occasion, but it was in following the same line of thought, Newman described closely some of the incidents of our Lord's passion; he then paused. For a few moments there was a breathless silence. Then, in a low, clear voice, of which the faintest vibration was audible in the farthest corner of St. Mary's, he said, 'Now, I bid you recollect that He to whom these things were done was Almighty God.' It was as if an electric stroke had gone through the church, as if every person present understood for the first time the meaning of what he had all his life been saying. I suppose it was an epoch in the mental history of more than one of my Oxford contemporaries.

Another sermon left its mark upon me. It was upon evidence. I had supposed up to that time that the chief events related in the Gospels were as well authenticated as any other facts of history. I had read Paley and Grotius at school, and their argu-

ments had been completely satisfactory to me. The Gospels had been written by apostles or companions of apostles. There was sufficient evidence, in Paley's words, 'that many professing to be original witnesses of the Christian miracles had passed their lives in labours, dangers, and sufferings in attestation of the accounts which they delivered. St. Paul was a further and independent authority. It was not conceivable that such men as St. Paul and the other apostles evidently were should have conspired to impose a falsehood upon the world, and should have succeeded in doing it undetected in an age exceptionally cultivated and sceptical. Gibbon I had studied also, and had thought about the five causes by which he explained how Christianity came to be believed; but they had seemed to me totally inadequate. I was something more than surprised, therefore, when I heard Newman say that Hume's argument against the credibility of miracles was logically sound. The laws of nature, so far as could be observed, were uniform, and in any given instance it *was* more likely, as a mere matter of evidence, that men should deceive or be deceived, than that those laws should have been deviated from. Of course he did not leave the matter in this position. Hume goes on to say that he is speaking of evidence

as addressed to the reason; the Christian religion addresses itself to faith, and the credibility of it is therefore unaffected by his objection. What Hume said in irony Newman accepted in earnest. Historically the proofs were insufficient, or sufficient only to create a sense of probability. Christianity was apprehended by a faculty essentially different. It was called faith. But what was faith, and on what did it rest? Was it as if mankind had been born with but four senses, by which to form their notions of things external to them, and that a fifth sense of sight was suddenly conferred on favoured individuals, which converted conjecture into certainty? I could not tell. For myself this way of putting the matter gave me no new sense at all, and only taught me to distrust my old ones.

I say at once that I think it was injudicious of Newman to throw out before us thus abruptly an opinion so extremely agitating. I explain it by supposing that here, as elsewhere, his sermons contained simply the workings of his own mind, and were a sort of public confession which he made as he went along. I suppose that something of this kind had been passing through him. He was in advance of his time. He had studied the early fathers; he had studied Church history, and the

lives of the saints and martyrs. He knew that the hard and fast line which Protestants had drawn at which miracles had ceased was one which no historical canon could reasonably defend. Stories of the exercise of supernatural power ran steadily from the beginning to the latest period of the Church's existence; many of them were as well supported by evidence as the miracles of the New Testament; and if reason was to be the judge, no arbitrary separation of the age of the Apostles from the age of their successors was possible. Some of these stories might be inventions, or had no adequate authority for them; but for others there was authority of eye-witnesses; and if these were to be set aside by a peremptory act of will as unworthy of credit, the Gospel miracles themselves might fall before the same methods. The argument of Hume was already silently applied to the entire post-apostolic period. It had been checked by the traditionary reverence for the Bible. But this was not reason; it was faith. Perhaps, too, he saw that the alternative did not lie as sharply as Paley supposed, between authentic fact and deliberate fraud. Legends might grow; they grew every day, about common things and persons, without intention to deceive. Imagination, emotion, affection, or, on the

other side, fear and animosity, are busy with the histories of men who have played a remarkable part in the world. Great historic figures—a William Tell, for instance—have probably had no historical existence at all, and yet are fastened indelibly into national traditions. Such reflections as these would make it evident that if the Christian miracles were to be believed, not as possibly or probably true, but as indisputably true—true in such a sense that a man's life on earth, and his hope for the future, could be securely based upon them—the history must be guaranteed by authority different in kind from the mere testimony to be gathered out of books. I suppose every thinking person would now acknowledge this to be true. And we see, in fact, that Christians of various persuasions supplement the evidence in several ways. Some assume the verbal inspiration of the Bible; others are conscious of personal experiences which make doubt impossible. Others, again, appeal justly to the existence of Christianity as a fact, and to the power which it has exerted in elevating and humanizing mankind. Newman found what he wanted in the living authority of the Church, in the existence of an organized body which had been instituted by our Lord Himself, and was still actively present among

us as a living witness of the truth. Thus the imperfection of the outward evidence was itself an argument for the Catholic theory. All religious people were agreed that the facts of the Gospel narrative really happened as they were said to have happened. Proof there must be somewhere to justify the conviction; and proof could only be found in the admission that the Church, the organized Church with its bishops and priests, was not a human institution, but was the living body through which the Founder of Christianity Himself was speaking to us.

Such, evidently, was one use to which Hume's objection could be applied, and to those who, like Newman, were provided with the antidote, there was no danger in admitting the force of it. Nor would the risk have been great with his hearers if they had been playing with the question as a dialectical exercise. But he had made them feel and think seriously about it by his own intense earnestness, and brought up as most of them had been to believe that Christianity had sufficient historical evidence for it, to be suddenly told that the famous argument against miracles was logically valid after all, was at least startling. The Church theory, as making good a testimony otherwise defective, was

new to most of us, and not very readily taken in. To remove the foundation of a belief, and to substitute another, is like putting new foundations to a house—the house itself may easily be overthrown in the process. I have said before that in a healthy state of things religion is considered too sacred to be argued about. It is believed as a matter of duty, and the why or the wherefore are not so much as thought about. Revolutions are not far off when men begin to ask whence the sovereign derives his authority. Scepticism is not far off when they ask why they believe their creed. We had all been satisfied about the Gospel history; not a shadow of doubt had crossed the minds of one of us; and though we might not have been able to give a logical reason for our certitude, the certitude was in us, and might well have been let alone. I afterwards read Hume attentively, and though old associations prevented me from recognizing the full force of what he had to say, no doubt I was unconsciously affected by him. I remember insisting to a friend that the essential part of religion was morality. My friend replied that morality was only possible to persons who received power through faith to keep the commandments. But this did not satisfy me, for it seemed contrary to fact. There were persons of

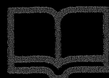
the goodness, for instance, of a Unitarian was only apparent. After all is said, the visible conduct of men is the best test that we can have of their inward condition. If not the best, where are we to find a better?

LETTER IV.

TRACT XC. AND ITS CONSEQUENCES.

My dear ——. After I had taken my degree, and before I re-entered upon residence as fellow, my confidence in my Oxford teachers underwent a further trial. I spent some months in Ireland in the family of an Evangelical clergyman. I need not mention names which have no historical notability. My new friends were favourable specimens of a type which was then common in Ireland. The Church of England was becoming semi-Catholic. The Church of Ireland left Catholicism to those to whom it properly belonged. It represented the principles of the Reformation. It was a branch of what Mr. Gladstone has called the Upas-tree of Protestant ascendency. Mr. —— and the circle





into which I was thrown were, to begin with, high-bred and cultivated gentlemen. They had seen the world. Some of them had been connected with the public movements of the time. O'Connell was then in his glory. I heard Irish affairs talked of by those who lived in the midst of them. A sharp line of division among the people distinguished the Protestants from the Catholics. The Protestants were industrious and thriving. Mendicancy, squalor, and misery went along with the flocks of the priest, whether as cause or effect of their belief, or in accidental connection with it, I could not tell. The country was outwardly quiet, but there were ominous undertones of disaffection. There were murders now and then in the mountains, and I was startled at the calmness with which they were spoken of. We were in the midst of the traditions of 1798. My friend's father had been attacked in his palace, and the folios in the library bore marks of having been used to barricade the windows. He himself spoke as if he was living on a volcano; but he was as unconcerned as a soldier at his post, and so far as outward affairs went he was as kind to Catholics as to Protestants. His outdoor servants were Catholics, and they seemed attached to him; but he knew that they belonged to secret societies, and that if

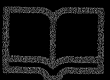
a quiet good sense, an intellectual breadth of feeling in this household, which to me, who had been bred up to despise Evangelicals as unreal and affected, was a startling surprise. I had looked down on Dissenters especially, as being vulgar among their other enormities; here were persons whose creed differed little from that of the Calvinistic Methodists, yet they were easy, natural, and dignified. In Ireland they were part of a missionary garrison, and in their daily lives they carried the colours of their faith. In Oxford, reserve was considered a becoming feature in the religious character. The doctrines of Christianity were mysteries, and mysteries were not to be lightly spoken of. Christianity at —— was part of the atmosphere which we breathed; it was the great fact of our existence, to which everything else was subordinated. Mystery it might be, but not more of a mystery than our own bodily lives, and the system of which we were a part. The problem was to arrange all our thoughts and requirements in harmony with the Christian revelation, and to act it out consistently in all that we said and did. The family devotions were long, but there was no

formalism, and everybody took a part in them. A chapter was read and talked over, and practical lessons were drawn out of it; otherwise there were no long faces or solemn affectations; the conversations were never foolish or trivial; serious subjects were lighted up as if by an ever-present spiritual sunshine.

Such was the new element into which I was introduced under the shadow of the Irish Upas-tree; the same uniform tone being visible in parents, in children, in the indoor servants, and in the surrounding society. And this was Protestantism. This was the fruit of the Reformation which we had been learning at Oxford to hate as rebellion and to despise as a system without foundation. The foundation of it was faith in the authority of Holy Scripture, which was supposed to be verbally inspired; and as a living witness, the presence of Christ in the heart. Here, too, the letter of the word was allowed to require a living authentication. The Anglo-Catholics at Oxford maintained that Christ was present in the Church; the Evangelicals said that he was present in the individual believing soul, and why might they not be right? So far as Scripture went they had promises to allege for themselves more definite than the Catholics. If the

My feelings of reverence for the Reformers revived. Fact itself was speaking for them. Beautiful pictures had been put before us of the mediæval Church which a sacrilegious hand had ruthlessly violated. Here on one side we saw the mediæval creed in full vitality with its fruits upon it which our senses could test; on the other, equally active, the fruits of the teaching of Luther and Calvin. I felt that I had been taken in, and I resented it. Modern history resumed its traditionary English aspect. I went again over the ground of the sixteenth century. Unless the intelligent part of Europe had combined to misrepresent the entire period, the corruption of Roman Catholicism had become intolerable. Put the matter as the Roman Catholics would, it was a fact impossible to deny, that they had alienated half Europe, that the Teutonic nations had risen against them in indignation, and had substituted for the Christianity of Rome the Christianity of the Bible. They had tried, and tried in vain, to extinguish the revolt in blood, and the national life of modern England had grown up out of their





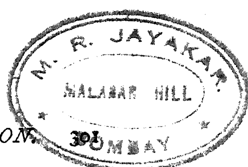
overthrow. With the Anglo-Catholics the phenomena were the same in a lighter form. The Anglo-Catholics, too, had persecuted so far as they dared; they, too, had been narrow, cruel, and exclusive. Peace and progress had only been made possible when their teeth were drawn and their nails pared, and they were tied fast under the control of Parliament. History, like present reality, was all in favour of the views of my Evangelical friends.

And if history was in their favour, so were analogy and general probability. Mediæval theology had been formed at a time when the relations of matter and spirit had been guessed at by imagination, rather than studied with care and observation. Mind it was now known could only act on matter through the body specially attached to it. Ideas reached the mind through the senses, but it was by method and sequence which, so far as experience went, was never departed from. The Middle Ages, on the other hand, believed in witchcraft and magic. Incantation could call up evil angels and control the elements. The Catholic theory of the Sacraments was the counterpart of enchantment. Outward mechanical acts which, except as symbols, had no meaning, were supposed to produce spiritual changes, and spoken words to produce, like spells, changes

in material substance. The imposition of a bishop's hands conferred supernatural powers. An ordained priest altered the nature of the elements in the Eucharist by consecrating them. Water and a prescribed formula regenerated an infant in baptism. The whole Church, it was true, had held these opinions down to the sixteenth century. But so it had believed that medicine was only efficacious if it was blessed; so it had believed that saints' relics worked miracles. Larger knowledge had taught us that magic was an illusion, that spells and charms were fraud or folly. The Reformers in the same way had thrown off the notion that there was anything mysterious or supernatural in the clergy or the Sacraments. The clergy in their opinion were like other men, and were simply set apart for the office of teaching the truths of religion. The Sacraments were symbols, which affected the moral nature of those who could understand them, as words or pictures, or music, or anything else which had an intelligible spiritual meaning. They brought before the mind in a lively manner the facts and principles of Christianity. To regard them as more was superstition and materialism. Evangelicalism had been represented to me as weak and illiterate. I had found it in harmony with reason and experience,

and recommended as it was by personal holiness in its professors, and general beauty of mind and character, I concluded that Protestantism had more to say for itself than my Oxford teachers had allowed.

For the first time, too, among these good people I was introduced to Evangelical literature. Newton and Faber had given me good reasons when I was a boy for believing the Pope to be the man of sin: but I had read nothing of Evangelical positive theology, and books like the 'Pilgrim's Progress' were nothing less than a revelation to me. I do not mean that I could adopt the doctrine in the precise shape in which it was presented to me, that I was *converted,* or anything of that kind; but I perceived that persons who rejected altogether the theory of Christianity which I had been taught to regard as the only tenable one, were as full of the spirit of Christ, and had gone through as many, as various, and as subtle Christian experiences as the most developed saint in the Catholic calendar. I saw it in their sermons, in their hymns, in their conversation. A clergyman, who was afterwards a bishop in the Irish Church, declared in my hearing that the theory of a Christian priesthood was a fiction; that the notion of the Sacraments as having a mechanical efficacy irrespective of their conscious



effect upon the mind of the receiver was an idolatrous superstition; that the Church was a human institution, which had varied in form in different ages, and might vary again; that it was always fallible; that it might have bishops in England, and dispense with bishops in Scotland and Germany; that a bishop was merely an officer; that the apostolical succession was probably false as a fact—and, if a fact, implied nothing but historical continuity. Yet the man who said these things had devoted his whole life to his Master's service—thought of nothing else, and cared for nothing else.

The opinions were of no importance in themselves; I was, of course, aware that many people held them; but I realized now for the first time that clergymen of weight and learning in the Church of England, ordained and included in its formularies, could think in this way and openly say so, and that the Church to which Newman and Keble had taught us to look as our guide did not condemn them. Clearly, therefore, if the Church equally admitted persons who held the sacramental theory, she regarded the questions between them as things indifferent. She, the sovereign authority, if the Oxford view of the Church's functions was correct, declared that on such points we might follow our own judgment.

This conclusion was forced home upon me, and shook the confidence which I had hitherto continued to feel in Newman. It was much in itself, and it relieved me of other perplexities. The piety, the charity, the moral excellence in the circle into which I had been thrown were evidences as clear as any evidence could be of a living faith. If the Catholic revivalists were right, these graces were but natural virtues, not derived through any recognized channel, uncovenanted mercies, perhaps counterfeits, not virtues at all, but cunning inventions of the adversary. And it had been impossible for me to believe this. A false diamond may gain credit with eyes that have never looked upon the genuine gem, but the pure water once seen cannot be mistaken. More beautiful human characters than those of my Irish Evangelical friends I had never seen, and I have never seen since. Whatever might be the 'Notes of the Church,' a holy life was the first and last of them; and a holy life it was demonstratedly plain to me, was no monopoly of the sacramental system.

At the end of a year I returned to Oxford. There had been a hurricane in the interval, and the storm was still raging. Not the University only, but all England, lay and clerical, was agitating itself over Tract XC. The Anglican Church had

been long ago described as having a Catholic Prayer-book, an Arminian clergy, and Calvinistic Articles. When either of the three schools asserted itself with emphasis the others took alarm. Since the revolution of 1688 Church and clergy had been contented to acquiesce in the common title of Protestant; by consent of high and low the very name of Catholic had been abandoned to the Romanists; and now when a Catholic party had risen again, declaring that they and they only were true Church of England men, the Articles, not unnaturally, had been thrown in their teeth. All the clergy had subscribed the Articles. The Articles certainly on the face of them condemned the doctrines which the revivalists had been putting forward. Weak brothers among them were beginning to think that the Articles had committed the Church to heresy, and that they ought to secede. There were even a few who considered that their position was not so much as honest. I recollect the Professor of Astronomy saying to me about this time that the obligation of a Tractarian to go to Rome was in the ratio of his intellectual obtuseness. If he was clever enough to believe two contradictory propositions at the same time, he might stay in the Church of England; if his capacity of reconciliation

was limited, he ought to leave it. It was to soothe the consciousness of these troubled spirits that Tract XC. was written. As their minds had opened they had recognized in the mass, in purgatory, in the authority of tradition, in infallibility of councils, doctrines which down to the schism had been the ancient faith of Christendom. The Articles seemed distinctly to repudiate them; and if these doctrines were true the body which rejected them could be no authentic branch of the Church Catholic. Newman undertook to remove this difficulty. He set himself to 'minimize' what the Articles said, just as in latter years he has 'minimized' the decree of Papal infallibility. He tells us that he cannot understand a religion which is not dogmatic; but he too finds tight-lacing uncomfortable; and though he cannot do without his dogma, it must mean as little as possible for him. He argues, in the first place, that the Articles could not have been intended to contradict the canons of the Council of Trent, as was popularly supposed, because they had been composed several years before those canons were published or the Council itself completed. Secondly, that they were directed not against Catholic doctrines, but against the popular abuses of those doctrines. They condemned 'masses;' they

did not condemn the mass. They condemned the Romish doctrine of purgatory; but the Romish was not the Greek, and there might be many others. Finally, the Articles were legal documents, and were to be interpreted according to the strict meaning of the words. We do not interpret an Act of Parliament by what we know from other sources of the opinions of its framers; we keep to the four corners of the Act itself. Newman said that we had as little occasion to trouble ourselves with the views of individual bishops in the sixteenth century.

The English mind does not like evasion; and on its first appearance the Tract was universally condemned as dishonest. Very good people, my Irish friends among them, detested it, not for the views which it advocated, but as trifling with truth. I could not go along with them, partly because it had become plain to me that, little as they knew it, they themselves had at least equally to strain the language of the Baptismal Service, and of one of the three absolutions; partly because I considered Newman's arguments to be legally sound. Formulas agreed on in councils and committees are not the produce of any one mind or of any one party. They are compromises in which opposing schools of thought are brought

at last to agree after many discussions and alterations. Expressions intended to be plain and emphatic, are qualified to satisfy objectors. The emphasis of phrases may remain, but the point emphasized has been blunted. The closer all such documents are scrutinized the more clear becomes the nature of their origin. Certainly, if the Catholic theory is correct, and if the Holy Spirit really instructs mankind through the medium of councils, and therefore through decrees which have been shaped in a manner so human, one can but wonder at the method that has been chosen. It seems like a deliberate contrivance to say nothing in seeming to say much; for there are few forms of words which cannot be perforated by an acute legal intellect. But as far as Tract XC. was concerned, public opinion, after taking time to reflect, has pronounced Newman acquitted. It is historically certain that Elizabeth and her ministers intentionally framed the Church formulas so as to enable every one to use them who would disclaim allegiance to the Pope. The English Catholics, who were then more than half the nation, applied to the Council of Trent for leave to attend the English Church services, on the express ground that no Catholic doctrine was denied in them. The Council of Trent refused permission, and the petitioners, after hesitating till in the defeat of the

Armada Providence had declared for the Queen, conformed (the greater number of them) on their own terms. They had fought for the Crown in the civil wars; they had been defeated, and since the Revolution had no longer existed as a theological party. But Newman was only claiming a position for himself and his friends which had been purposely left open when the constitution of the Anglican Church was formed.

But religious men do not argue like lawyers. The Church of England might have been made intentionally comprehensive three centuries ago, but ever since 1688 it had banished Popery and Popish doctrines. When the Catholics were numerous and dangerous, it might have been prudent to conciliate them; but the battle had been fought out since, and a century and a half of struggles and conspiracies and revolutions and dethroned dynasties were not to go for nothing. Compromise might have dictated the letter of the Articles, but unbroken usage for a hundred and fifty years had created a Protestant interpretation of them which had become itself authoritative. Our fathers had risked their lives to get rid of Romanism. It was not to be allowed to steal into the midst of us again under false colours. So angry men said at the time, and so they acted.

Newman, however, had done his work. He had broken the back of the Articles. He had given the Church of our fathers a shock from which it was not to recover in its old form. He had written his Tract, that he might see whether the Church of England would tolerate Catholic doctrine. Had he waited a few years, till the seed which he had sown could grow, he would have seen the Church unprotestantizing itself more ardently than his most sanguine hope could have anticipated, the squire parsons of the Establishment gone like a dream, an order of priests in their places, with an undress uniform in the world, and at their altars 'celebrating' masses in symbolic robes, with a directory to guide their inexperience. He would have seen them hearing confession, giving absolution, adoring Our Lady and professing to receive visits from her, preaching transubstantiation and purgatory and penance and everything which his Tract had claimed for them; founding monasteries and religious orders, washing out of their naves and chancels the last traces of Puritan sacrilege; doing all this in defiance of courts of law and Parliaments and bishops, and forcing the authorities to admit that they cannot be interfered with. It has been a great achievement for a single man; not the less so that, although he admitted that he had no right to

leave the Church in which he was born unless she repudiated what he considered to be true, he himself would not even pause to discern whether she would repudiate it or not.

But Newman, though he forbids private judgment to others, seems throughout to retain the right of it for his own guidance. He regarded the immediate treatment of the message which he had delivered as the measure of his own duty. His convictions had grown slowly on himself; they were new to the clergy, unpalatable to the laity, violently at variance with the national feelings and traditions. Yet the bishops were expected to submit on the spot, without objection or hesitation, to the dictation of a single person; and because they spoke with natural alarm and anxiety, his misgivings about the Catholicity of the Church of England turned instantly into certainties, and in four years carried him away over the border to Popery.

It is evident now, on reading Newman's own history of his religious opinions, that the world, which said from the beginning that he was going to Rome, understood him better than he then understood himself, or, perhaps, than he understands himself now. A man of so much ability would never have rushed to conclusions so precipitately merely on account of

a few bishops' charges. Excuses these charges might be, or explanations to account for what he was doing; but the motive force which was driving him forward was the overmastering 'idea' to which he had surrendered himself. He could have seen, if he had pleased, the green blade of the Catholic harvest springing in a thousand fields; at present there is scarcely a clergyman in the country who does not carry upon him in one form or other the marks of the Tractarian movement. The answer which he required has been given. The Church of England has not only admitted Catholic doctrine, but has rushed into it with extraordinary enthusiasm. He might be expected to have recognized that his impatient departure has been condemned by his own arguments. Yet the 'Apologia' shows no repentance nor explains the absence of it. He tells us that he has found peace in the Church of Rome, and wonders that he could ever have hoped to find it in the English Communion. Very likely. Others knew how it would be from the first. He did not know it; but if the bench of bishops had been as mild and enduring as their present successors, it would have made no difference.

Newman was living at Littlemore, a village three miles from Oxford, when I came back from Ireland.

He had given up his benefice, though still occasionally preaching in St. Mary's pulpit before the University. He was otherwise silent and passive, though his retirement was suspected, and he was an object of much impertinent curiosity. For myself he was as fascinating as ever. I still looked on him—I do at this moment—as one of the two most remarkable men whom I have ever met with; but I had learnt from my evangelical experiences that equally good men could take different views in theology, and Newmanism had ceased to have exclusive interest to me. I was beginning to think that it would be well if some of my High Church friends could remember also that opinions were not everything. Many of them were tutors, and tutors responsible for the administration of the University. The discipline was lax, the undergraduates were idle and extravagant; there were scandalous abuses in college management, and life at the University was twice as expensive as it need have been. Here were plain duties lying neglected and unthought of, or, if remembered at all, remembered only by the Liberals, whom Newman so much detested. Intellectually, the controversies to which I had listened had unsettled me. Difficulties had been suggested which I need not have heard of, but out of which some road or other had

now to be looked for. I was thrown on my own resources, and began to read hard in modern history and literature. Carlyle's books came across me; by Carlyle I was led to Goethe. I discovered Lessing for myself, and then Neander and Schleiermacher. The 'Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation,' which came out about that time, introduced modern science to us under an unexpected aspect, and opened new avenues of thought. As I had perceived before that the Evangelicals could be as saint-like as Catholics, so now I found that men of the highest gifts and unimpeached purity of life could differ from both by whole diameters in the interpretation of the same phenomena. Further, this became clear to me, that the Catholic revival in Oxford, spontaneous as it seemed, was part of a general movement which was going on all over Europe. In France, in Holland, in Germany, intellect and learning had come to conclusions from which religion and conscience were recoiling. Pious Protestants had trusted themselves upon the Bible as their sole foundation. They found their philosophers and professors assuming that the Bible was a human composition—parts of it of doubtful authenticity, other parts bearing marks on them of the mistaken opinions of the age when these books were written;

and they were flying terrified back into the Church from which they had escaped at the Reformation, like ostriches hiding their heads in a bush.

Yet how could the Church, as they called it, save them? If what the philosophers were saying was untrue, it could be met by argument. If the danger was real, they were like men caught in a thunder-storm, flying for refuge to a tree, which only the more certainly would attract the lightning. Catholics are responsible for everything for which Protestants are responsible, plus a great deal besides which Protestants rejected once as lies, and the stroke will fall where the evidence is weakest. Christianity, Catholic and Protestant alike, rests on the credibility of the Gospel history. Verbal inaccuracies, if such there be, no more disprove the principal facts related in the Gospels than mistakes in Lord Clarendon's History of the Rebellion prove that there was never a commonwealth in England. After all is said, these facts must be tested by testimony, like all other facts. The personal experiences of individuals may satisfy themselves, but are no evidence to others. Far less can the Church add to the proof, for the Church rests on the history, not the history on the Church. That the Church exists, and has existed, proves no more than that

it is an institution which has had a beginning in time, and may have an end in time. The individuals of whom it is composed have believed in Christianity, and their witness is valuable according to their opportunities, like that of other men, but this is all. That the Church as a body is immortal, and has infallible authority antecedent to proof, is a mere assumption, like the tortoise in the Indian myth. If the facts cannot be established, the Catholic theory falls with the Protestant; if they can, they are the common property of mankind, and to pile upon them the mountains of incredibilities for which the Catholic Church has made itself answerable, is only to play into the hands of unbelievers, and reduce both alike to legend.

Still, the reaction was a fact, visible everywhere, especially in Protestant countries. The bloody stains on the Catholic escutcheon were being painted over. The savage massacres, the stake at Smithfield, and the Spanish auto-da-fé, the assassinations and civil wars and conspiracies at which we had shuddered as children, were being condoned or explained away. Hitherto it had been strenuously denied that the Oxford movement was in the direction of Rome; it was insisted rather that, more than anything else, Tractarianism would tend to keep men away from

Rome. No Protestant had spoken harder things of the Roman see and its doings than Newman had and I was still for myself unable to believe that he was on his way to it. But the strongest swimmers who are in the current of a stream must go where it carries them, and his retirement from active service in the Church of England showed that he himself was no longer confident.

LETTER V.

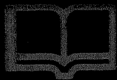
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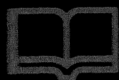
MY DEAR ——. I said in my last letter that at the time at which Newman withdrew from Oxford to Littlemore there was nothing to lead us generally to suppose that he meditated secession. Tract XC., in spite of the outcry, had not been condemned by any legally constituted court. No existing law had been broken by it, and there was no likelihood of fresh Parliamentary legislation. He had in fact won the battle. He had established his principle. If he chose to hold and teach his Catholic doctrines as a member of the Church of England, it was clear that he would not be driven out of it. If he had meant to leave the Church of England, Tract XC. would have been gratuitous and an impertinence.

Thus, when it was announced that he was to bring out a series of biographies of distinguished English saints, the proposal seemed to fall in with the theory of the continuity of the mediæval and the existing English Church. The great names upon the Calendar belonged not to Rome, but to us; they were part of our national history, and when I was myself asked to assist, the proposal pleased and flattered me. I suppose now that the object was to recommend asceticism, and perhaps to show that the power of working miracles had been continued in the Church until its unity was broken. But no such intention was communicated to us. We were free to write as we pleased, each on our own responsibility. For myself I went to work with the assumption which I thought myself entitled to make, that men who had been canonized had been probably good men, and at least remarkable men. It was an opportunity for throwing myself into mediæval literature, and studying in contemporary writings what human life had really been like in this island, in an age of which the visible memorials remained in churches and cathedrals and monastic ruins.

I do not regret my undertaking, though I little guessed the wilderness of perplexities into which I was throwing myself. I knew that I was entering a

me completely for what I should find. The order of nature, whether always unbroken or not, is generally uniform. In the lives of the Christian saints the order of nature seems only to have existed to give holy men an opportunity of showing their superiority to material conditions. The evidence is commonly respectable. The biographer may be a personal friend, or at least the friend of a friend; yet not 'Jack the Giant-killer' or the 'Arabian Nights' introduces one more entirely into a supernatural world. When a miracle occurs the unbeliever is astonished; the believer, who records the story, sees no more than he expects. He looks only to the object, and if the motive is sufficient, the more marvellous the event the more likely it is to have occurred, and the less it requires proof or critical examination. If a sceptic dares to doubt, it is only that he may be the more utterly confounded. The accounts are given gravely, as if they were of real facts, without grace, without imagination, without any of the ornamental work of acknowledged invention—the sublime and ridiculous mixed together indiscriminately, with the ridiculous largely predominating. Was it possible that such stuff could





be true? or even intended to be taken for truth? Was it not rather mere edifying reading for the monks' refectories; the puerile absurdities thrown in to amuse innocently their dreary hours? Was it not as idle to look for historical truth in the lives of the saints as in 'Amadis de Gaul' or 'Orlando Furioso'?

It seemed so, and yet it seemed not so. For the great saints (or for the small saints where they had founded religious houses) there were special commemorative services, in which their most grotesque performances were not forgotten. It was not easy to believe that men specially called religious, and who considered truth to be one of the duties which religion prescribed, could thus deliberately consecrate what they knew, and would admit, to be lies. There is a class of composition which is not history, and is not conscious fiction—it was produced in old times; it is produced in our times; it will be produced wherever and as long as human society exists—something which honestly believes itself to be fact, and is created, nevertheless, by the imagination. The stories of the Edda were not felt to be false when they were sung in old Danish halls. The genuine myth is not invented—is not written—but grows. It begins from a small seed, and unfolds

into form as it passes from lip to lip. It is then assigned by tradition to a particular person. 'The story I tell you came from So-and-So,' says some one, wishing to give it credibility. 'He was on the spot and saw or heard it.' 'So-and-So' may never have heard of it; but the story may still survive and carry his name along with it as a further legend. Now, and always, remarkable persons become mythical. Anecdotes are told of them, almost always inaccurate; words are assigned to them which they never spoke. Smaller luminaries are robbed to swell the greatness of the central orb. We, in these days of equality, disbelieve in exceptional heroes, as the Middle Ages believed in them. Disbelief shows itself in scandal. There is a pleasure in finding that an eminent man is but a mortal after all, and proof of weakness can be discovered if it is wanted. Great qualities, on the other hand, are magnetic, and every report, good or evil, true or false, about persons possessed of them is likely to stick. Hero-worship and saint-worship are honourable forms of a universal tendency; but it is idle to expect from worshippers an accurate investigation into fact. Evidently the stories which I was studying were legends, though in sober prose—legends which were never examined into, because it would have been a sin to doubt them. There was

one sceptic even among the apostles; but St. Thomas was held up as an example to be shunned. According to the doctrines of the Church the spirit of belief was angelic, the spirit of doubt was devilish; and thus in devout ages, and in the devout atmosphere of convents and monasteries, the volume of spiritual wonders grew unchecked. To balance evidence and compare the degrees of it is mere waste of time. The evidence of such witnesses is worth nothing, unless they can be produced and cross-examined. The child when he has first seen a conjurer, the disciple who has been at a spiritualist's séance, cannot report faithfully what has passed immediately under his eyes. To have seen something which he cannot understand delights him, and he describes it with the unconscious omissions and exaggerations which make a natural explanation impossible. So it was with the hagiologist. He tells his story in good faith. Perhaps we have the authentic narrative of an eye-witness. Yet the only fact of which we can feel assured is that he believed, or professed to believe, that the subject of it worked miracles. He has a conviction, to begin with, that holy men had powers of this kind, and therefore it was a matter of course that these powers should have shown themselves. Character is no protection. We may assume

that Anselm, for instance, would report nothing which he did not suppose to be true; but piety, which is a security for good faith, is none against credulity; or perhaps, if we could have asked Anselm, we should have found that his very notion of truth was not our notion; that he meant by truth, truth of idea, rather than literal truth of fact. Intellect, again, is no protection. Among the saints' biographers are found the greatest names in the Church. Athanasius wrote a life of St. Anthony; Bede wrote a life of St. Cuthbert. It is not too much to say that both these distinguished men, and the thousand smaller men who followed in their tracks, were *possessed*, and that things which were not appeared to them as things that were. So it is in our own time. The pious Catholic tells us that he cannot resist the evidence for the liquefaction of the blood of St. Januarius; that is, any number of witnesses can be brought to declare that they have seen it. If the smallest civil action in an English court of justice turned on the liquefying of blood under similar circumstances, and a thousand witnesses swore they had seen it, the evidence would go for nothing, unless the substance called blood had been examined and analyzed by competent chemists, and the process repeated in the presence of trained

observers. Ordinary spectators see phenomena every day which to them are equally inexplicable, at Maskelyne and Cooke's. Miracles, authenticated by the same kind of testimony, and the same degree of it, are worked at Lourdes and at Knock, and at saints' shrines, and at mesmeric doctors' reception rooms. The testimony of credulous and ignorant people in such cases is simply worthless, and the multiplication of nothing remains nothing still. As to St. Januarius, it is noticeable that a miracle, closely resembling that which modern Catholics believe, used to be worked in the same Neapolitan territory in the Roman times. Horace, describing the various stations at which he stopped on his way from Rome to Brindisi, says—

> Dehinc Gnatia Lymphis
> Iratis extructa dedit risusque jocosque,
> Dum flammâ sine thura liquescere limine sacro
> Persuadere cupit. Credat Judæus Apella,
> Non ego—namque Deos didici securum agere ævum;
> Nec siquid miri faciat natura Deos id
> Tristes ex alto cœli dimittere tecto.

Cardinal Newman, with the Jew Apella, would have believed in the supernatural liquefaction of the incense. Horace in like manner would 'laugh and jest' at St. Januarius. It is not a matter of proof but of temperament. Why should we allow our

convictions on the most serious of subjects to be influenced by evidence which we should not dare to admit if we were deciding a common civil criminal case?

For an intending biographer this was a serious discovery. I could not repeat what I found written, for the faith was wanting. A spiritualist many years after assured me that I could work a miracle myself if I had but faith. Could I but have faith in the Great Nothing all things would be possible for me—but, alas! I had none. So with the lives of the saints. St. Patrick I found once lighted a fire with icicles, changed a Welsh marauder into a wolf, and floated to Ireland upon an altar stone. I thought it nonsense. I found it eventually uncertain whether Patricius was not a title, and whether any single apostle of that name had so much as existed. After a short experiment I had to retreat out of my occupation, and let the series go on without me. But the excursion among the Will-o'-the-wisps of the spiritual morasses did not leave me as it found me. I was compelled to see that in certain conditions of mind the distinction between objective and subjective truth has no existence. An impression is created that it is fit, right, or likely that certain things should take place, and the outward fact is assumed to correspond with that

conviction is as complete as the most searching investigation could have made it. His own feeling that something is true is to him complete evidence that it is true. True it may be; and yet not true in the sense which he attaches to the word. There are several kinds of truth. There is the truth of pure mathematics, which is perfect as long as it concerns lines or figures which exist only as abstractions. There is the truth of a drama like 'Hamlet,' which is literary invention, yet is a true picture of men and women. There is the truth of a fable. There is the truth of an edifying moral tale. There is the truth of a legend which has sprung up involuntarily out of the hearts of a number of people, and therefore represents something in their own minds. Finally, there is the dull truth of plain experienced fact, which has to be painfully sifted out by comparison of evidence, by observation, and, when possible, by experiment, and is held at last, after all care has been taken, by those who know what truth of fact means, with but graduated certainty, and as liable at all times to revision and correction. The distinction, commonplace as it seems, was forgotten by the hagiologists.

It is forgotten, for that matter, by most historians. All men, when their feelings are interested, believe what they wish to believe, or what their preconceptions represent to them as internally probable. Theologians avow that other methods besides examination of evidence are required to establish the truths of faith. The truths of faith must be held with absolute certitude. The truths of science, the most assured of them, are held only as high probabilities; and the evidence has therefore to be supplemented by emotion, imagination, and speculative reasoning introduced from adjoining provinces. Cardinal Newman describes in his 'Grammar of Assent' the process by which probabilities are converted into certainties; with the help of it he can justify his own belief in the miracle at Naples. He can create antecedent likelihoods which dispense with completeness of proof, or remove antecedent unlikelihoods which call for fuller and more minute proofs. It is the theory on which, unconsciously held, the crop of legends in the Catholic Church has grown for century after century, and is growing now luxuriant as ever. It is the theory on which Our Lady is believed to be showing herself in France, in Ireland, or more recently to the Anglican monks at Llantony. It is not a theory by

which any truth was ever discovered that can be tested, and sifted, and verified by experiment, or applied to the practical service of mankind.

And this leads me to say a very few words on a subject to which I alluded in an earlier letter; the question that rose fifteen years ago between Cardinal Newman and Charles Kingsley. Mr. Kingsley, writing impetuously as he often did, said that the Catholic clergy did not place truth among the highest virtues, and he added that Father Newman acknowledged it. Father Newman asked him when he had acknowledged it, and a controversy followed in which Kingsley, instead of admitting, as he ought to have done, that he had spoken unadvisedly and in too sweeping terms, defended himself, and defended himself unsuccessfully. Kingsley, in truth, entirely misunderstood Newman's character. Newman's whole life had been a struggle for truth. He had neglected his own interests; he had never thought of them at all. He had brought to bear a most powerful and subtle intellect to support the convictions of a conscience which was superstitiously sensitive. His single object had been to discover what were the real relations between man and his Maker, and to shape his own conduct by the conclusions at which he arrived. To represent such a

person as careless of truth was neither generous nor even reasonable. But Newman as little understood his adversary. He was not called on, perhaps, to look far into a subject which did not concern him. He had been attacked, as he thought, wantonly. He struck back; and he struck most effectively.

Kingsley, however, had passed through his own struggles. He, too, had been affected at a distance by the agitations of the Tractarian controversy. He, like many others, had read what Newman had written about ecclesiastical miracles. The foundations of his own faith had been disturbed. He was a man of science; he knew what evidence was. He believed that Newman's methods of reasoning confounded his perceptions of truth, disregarding principles which alone led to conclusions that could be trusted in other subjects, and which, therefore. he could alone trust in religion. His feelings had been, perhaps, embittered by the intrusion of religious discord into families in which he was interested, traceable all of it to the Oxford movement. He himself had determined to try every fact which was offered for his belief by the strict rules of inductive science and courts of justice; and every other method appeared to him to be treason to his intellect and to reduce truth, where truth

of fact was before everything essential, to the truth of fable, or fiction, or emotional opinion. This was at the bottom of his mind, however unguardedly he expressed himself. He was an orthodox Protestant. The outward evidence for the Gospel history was strong in itself. It was supplemented by the effect which Christianity had produced in the world, by the position which it had assumed, and the renovation which it had produced in the human heart and character. It was supplemented in himself by personal experience. He has told me of answers which he had received to his prayers. But this, as he was well aware, was evidence to himself alone. He stood, practically, on the broad ground that religion, that the fear of God, was alone able to make alive the nobler part of man's nature. This was plain matter of outward experience which the whole history of the world could verify. To him, when he was placed as a clergyman in the Church of England, the fear of God was bound up with the form of religion established in his own country. He knew as well as any one that human errors were continually forcing themselves into the popular creeds. There had been changes in the past, there might be changes in the future; meanwhile, he held fast himself by the English

Church as it had been purified by the Reformers in the sixteenth century. In his opinion, to take up again the traditions and beliefs which had been then abandoned, was to return like the dog to his vomit—a thing impossible to do sincerely, a thing impious to attempt to do in wilfulness or fancy, and certain to avenge itself by a contemptuous rejection of all religion whatever. The Puritans had whitewashed the churches, broken the windows in which the miracles of the saints had shone in glorious colours, replaced the pictures on the walls with plain texts from Scripture. They would have no lies either taught or suggested in God's house, whatever might be done elsewhere. The Catholic reaction, with its decorations, its choral services, its celebrations, its vestments, its wardrobes of devotional machinery, was similarly detestable to Kingsley. If the creed was true, no tone of voice could be too plain and simple in repeating facts of such infinite importance. To leave it to be chanted by a parcel of boys in surplices could but suggest at last that it was not true, as facts are true; but was on the level of song or legend like a ballad of Robin Hood. Newman's influence had begun the wild dance, and Kingsley had always thought of him with a kind of resentment.

But enough of this. I return to the lives of the saints and their effect upon myself. The conclusion which I had drawn was that ecclesiastical biographers had composed their stories with the freedom of epic poets, and that religious truths resembled rather the truths of poetry than the truths of history. I had been taught by Newman that there was no distinction in kind between the saints' miracles and the miracles in the Bible. The restoration of the dead man to life by touching Elisha's bones, corresponded to the cures performed by relics. The changing of water into wine, the coin in the fish's mouth, the devils in the swine, the calming of the storm on the lake, the walking on the sea, were stories which, if we met anywhere but where they were, we should call legends; while the power of the saints, like that of apostles and prophets, was exerted chiefly in healing the sick and raising the dead to life.

The parallel had been forced upon us to gain credibility for the marvels of ecclesiastical history; but it was natural, it was inevitable, that the alternative possibility should now suggest itself, that all supernatural stories were legendary wherever we found them. Hume's argument, we had been already told, was intellectually correct. It was more

likely, as a mere question of human probability, that men should deceive or be deceived, than that the continuity of nature should have been disturbed. Faith, we had been also told, was to come to the assistance of reason, and reverse the conclusion; but faith was not made more easy when the burden which it was to carry was enlarged by these voluminous additions. The authenticity and inspiration of the Gospels had been assumed till quite recent times as a fact as certain as our own existence. To question either had been forbidden by the law of the land, and biblical criticism had been as impotent as the investigations into the pretensions of holy persons whom the Church had predetermined to canonize. So long as the belief remained unshaken, any answer sufficed for objections. But the case was now altered. Great German scholars had come to a widely different conclusion. Very able men of unblemished character, here at home and elsewhere, were doubting about it; and this could no longer be concealed.

To frighten us off, their personal character had been libelled. I had been brought up to believe that not even a Dissenter could be a really good man, and that unbelievers were profligates seeking only an excuse for indulging their wicked passions.

Such arguments are spectres formidable while they produce fear, but provoking reaction and even indignation when the ghost is found to be but a stuffed figure streaked with phosphorus. It is a very serious thing when a man is brought to recognize that truths, which he has been taught to look upon as indisputable, are not regarded as truths at all by persons competent to form an independent opinion. Such questions need not have been raised in this country. The Oxford revivalists had provoked the storm, but had no spell which would allay it. They did not try to allay it. They used it for their own cause. Those whom I had known best were now far on their way to Rome. 'Either us or nothing,' they said. 'You see where reason leads you. You see what has come of the Reformation. If you do not believe in the Church Catholic and Apostolic, you have no right to believe in God—and the Church Catholic is the Church of Rome.'

So my friends argued. I could not myself admit the alternative. Difficulties there might be, but they told as heavily against Catholics as against Protestants. If the historical foundations of Christianity were shaken, the Church of Rome was in as much danger as the Church of England or the Church of Scotland. It was in more danger, from the additional

load of incredibilities which the Protestants had flung from them.

As a matter of experience Catholic countries had bred more infidels than Protestant countries. Voltaire and the Encyclopædists had been pupils of the Jesuits. Vergniaud and Barbaroux, Danton and Robespierre, had been taught as children to pray to the Virgin and the saints. Charles Kingsley had solid ground under his feet compared with the gilded clouds on which the Catholic enthusiasts imagined that they were floating into security.

Newman himself never talked in this wild way. He was too conscious of his own obligation to his early teaching. Protestantism did, as a fact, sustain the belief in Christianity, whether its reasonings were sound or unsound; and he was too wise, too seriously in earnest, to press the logic of alternatives. He was glad that people should believe anyhow, and he had never fallen into the scornful note in which Evangelicals had been scoffed at. But what he said and what he wrote tended practically to the same end. He was surrendering himself to an idea, and was borne along by it as if he were riding on a nightmare. Soon after we heard that he had himself gone over. He had gone, it seems to me (after reading all that he had said about it in

the 'Apologia'), as men go when under a destiny, not because their intellect has been convinced by evidence and argument, but because they are impelled by some internal disposition which they suspect while they deny it. His friends might have taken the plunge with a light heart. They had been living in an enchanted circle of thoughts and formulas, and their minds for long had never strayed beyond them. Newman's intellect was keen and clear as ever. He at least knew what he was about. It might have occurred to him to ask when the resolution was once taken, 'What am I not doing, if it is all a dream!'

My eldest brother had left to us younger ones, as a characteristic instruction, that if we ever saw Newman and Keble disagree, we might think for ourselves. The event which my brother had thought as impossible as that a double star should fly asunder in space, had actually occurred. We had been floated out into mid-ocean upon the Anglo-Catholic raft, buoyed up by airy bubbles of ecclesiastical sentiment. The bubbles had burst, the raft was splintered, and we—I mean my other brother and myself—were left, like Ulysses, struggling in the waves.

I need not trouble you with our particular fortunes. I shall have to write you one more letter,

and I shall tell you then the little which need be said of my own experiences. It was thought that when Newman went he would create a secession like that of the Free Kirk in Scotland. This was a mistake. With him, either before or immediately after, a few men did go of known ability: Hope Scott, Frederick Faber, Ward of the 'Ideal,' the two Wilberforces, Robert and Henry, and two or three others. The rest, inconsiderable in numbers, were Newman's personal disciples, undistinguished save by piety of life. The seed has grown since, and is still growing, chiefly in families of the better classes, as they are called, among people who have money enough to live upon and nothing to do. Among them the effect has been very wide, and to appearance not salutary. Wives have quarrelled with their husbands, and husbands with wives; the son has been set against the father, and the father against the son; thousands of households have been made miserable by young people dissatisfied with their spiritual condition, and throwing themselves upon Catholic priests because they require, as they fancy, something deeper and truer 'than was enough for the last century.' Great lords and ladies, weary of the emptiness of their lives, have gone to the Church of Rome for a new sensation. Conversion has become

fashionable. With the help of Ireland the Catholics have simultaneously become a power in Parliament. Cardinals and Monsignors are to be seen in London drawing-rooms. Convents and monasteries are multiplying. A Catholic tide is still flowing, and no one yet can say how far it may rise. It has affected at present the idle and the ignorant, and has left untouched the industrious and intelligent; but the influence on society has been very considerable.

More remarkable, and infinitely more mischievous, has been the general influence of the Tractarian movement on the Church of England. It was thought at first that Newman's secession had destroyed the party which he had called into being. The shepherd was smitten and the sheep were scattered. The Evangelicals could say that they had been right from the first. Catholic principles led to Rome; they had no place in a Protestant Church. But for the clergy sacerdotalism had a fatal attraction: it gave them professional consequence; they thought that they could keep their wives and their livings and yet recover and wield again their old spiritual authority. They rallied from their confusion; they brightened up their churches; they revolutionized their rituals. In learning they were more than a match for their

Reformation was studied, the more plain became the original intention that Catholics who would abjure the Pope should be comprehended under the Anglican formulas. The Low Church had had their innings; the High Church have now their turn. Had we to live again through the struggle of 1829, we should no longer speak of Catholic emancipation, but of Roman Catholic. The change in the meaning of the word marks the change in popular opinion. Externally the Ritualists have won the battle. They too have their absolutions and their masses, and their monks and nuns and miracles and the rest; and it has been decided that they may keep them. But what a price has the victory cost! The nation has ceased to care what the clergy say or do. The Church of England, as part of the constitution of the country, has ceased to exist. Political latitudinarianism goes on upon its way. The barriers of privilege fall before it. The Third Estate of the realm can no more stay the stream of change than a rush can stay the current of a river. As the Church has become 'Catholic,' the honoured name of Protestant has passed to the Nonconformist. The laity stand aloof, indifferent and contemptuous. The thinking part of

it has now a seriousness of its own and a philosophy of its own which has also grown and is growing. The old order of things might have remained indefinitely had it been left undisturbed; but the controversy has undermined its traditions. Questions have been provoked which now must have a real answer. The clergy magnify their office, but the more they make of themselves the less is their intellectual influence. The great body of the English people, which is Protestant to the heart, will never allow their pretensions; and while they are discussing among themselves the nature of their supernatural commission, they are driving science and criticism to ask if there is anything in the world supernatural at all. The storm will die away, agitation is wearisome, and we may subside into a dull acquiescence even with the travestie of ecclesiasticism which is now in possession of the field. But the active mind of the country will less and less concern itself with a system which it despises. A ritualist English Church will be as powerless over the lives of the people as the Roman augurs over the Rome of Cicero and Cæsar; and centuries will pass before religion and common sense will again work together with the practical harmony which existed between them in the days of Whately and Arnold, and Hare and Sedgwick.

This is the substance of what I have to say to you, and here I might end; but something is still left which will require another letter.

LETTER VI.

My dear ——. My narrative is ended. I have told you what I can personally remember of the origin and course of the Tractarian movement. I have now to add a few more words about the remarkable man whose name has been so often mentioned in these letters. I said that I thought he had been *possessed* with a particular idea. His own words will explain what I conceive that idea to have been. Cardinal Newman is the one thinker of commanding intellect who has advised us to seek shelter from the distractions of this present age in the Roman Catholic Church. A passage in the 'Apologia' is a photograph of his inmost heart, and explains the premisses of which this is the conclusion. It is long, but it is so beautiful that the reader who has never seen it before will wish that it was longer. I will say afterwards, in my poor language, why I for one could not go with him, but preferred to steer away into the open ocean. I believed that it was a siren's

song, and that the shore from which it came had been strewn for centuries with the bones of the lost mariners who were betrayed by such enchanting music.

'Starting with the being of God (which is as certain to me as the certainty of my own existence, though when I try to put the grounds of that certainty into logical shape, I find a difficulty in doing so, in mood and figure, to my satisfaction), I look out of myself into the world of men, and there I see a sight which fills me with unspeakable distress. The world seems simply to give the lie to that great truth of which my whole being is so full; and the effect upon me is in consequence, as a matter of necessity, as confusing as if it denied that I am in existence myself. If I looked into a mirror and did not see my face, I should have the sort of feeling which actually comes upon me when I look into this living busy world and see no reflex of its Creator. This is to me one of the great difficulties of this absolute primary truth to which I referred just now. Were it not for the voice speaking so clearly in my conscience and my heart, I should be an Atheist, or a Pantheist, or a Polytheist, when I looked into the world. I am speaking for myself only, and I am far

from denying the real force of the arguments in proof of a God, drawn from the general facts of human society; but these do not warm me or enlighten me; they do not take away the winter of my desolation, or make the buds unfold and the leaves grow within me, and my moral being rejoice. The sight of the world is nothing else than the prophet's scroll, full of lamentation, and mourning, and woe.

'To consider the world in its length and breadth, its various history, the many races of men, their starts, their fortunes, their mutual alienation, their conflicts; and then their ways, habits, governments, forms of worship, their enterprises, their aimless courses, their random achievements and acquirements, the impotent conclusion of long-standing facts, the tokens so faint and broken of a superintending design, the blind evolution of what turn out to be great powers or truths; the progress of things as if from unreasoning elements, not towards final causes; the greatness and littleness of man, his far-reaching aims, his short duration, the curtain hung over his futurity; the disappointments of life, the defeat of good, the success of evil, the pervading idolatries, the corruptions, the dreary, hopeless irreligion, that condition of the whole race so fearfully yet exactly

described in the apostle's words, "Having no hope, and without God in this world;" all this is a vision to dizzy and appal, and inflicts upon the mind a sense of profound mystery which is absolutely beyond human solution.

'What shall be said of this heart-piercing, reason-bewildering fact? I can only answer that either there is no Creator, or this living society of men is, in a true sense, discarded from his presence. Did I see a boy of good make and mind, with the token on him of a refined nature, cast upon the world without provision, unable to say whence he came, his birth-place or his family connections, I should conclude that there was some mystery connected with his history, and that he was one of whom, for one cause or another, his parents were ashamed. Thus only should I be able to account for the contrast between the promise and condition of his being. And so I argue about the world; if there be a God, since there is a God, the human race is implicated in some terrible aboriginal calamity. It is out of joint with the purposes of its Creator. This is a fact, a fact as true as the fact of its existence; and thus the doctrine of what is theologically called original sin becomes to me almost as certain as that the world exists, and as the existence of God.

'And now, supposing it were the blessed and loving will of the Creator to interfere in this anarchical condition of things, what are the methods which might be necessarily or naturally involved in his object of mercy? Since the world is in so abnormal a state, surely it would be no surprise to me if the interposition were of necessity equally extraordinary, or what is called miraculous. But that subject does not directly come into the scope of my present remarks. Miracles as evidence involve an argument; and I, of course, am thinking of some means which does not immediately run into argument. I am rather asking what must be the antagonist by which to withstand and baffle the fierce energy of passion, and the all-corroding, all-dissolving scepticism of the intellect in religious inquiries. I have no intention at all to deny that truth is the real object of our reason; and that if it does not attain to truth, either the premiss or the process is in fault; but I am not speaking of right reason, but of reason as it acts in fact and concretely in fallen man. I know that even the unaided reason, when correctly exercised, leads to a belief in God, in the immortality of the soul, and in a future retribution. But I am considering it actually and historically, and in this point of view I do not think I am wrong in saying

that its tendency is towards a simple unbelief in matters of religion. No truth, however sacred, can stand against it in the long run; and hence it is that in the Pagan world when our Lord came, the last traces of the religious knowledge of former times was all but disappearing from those portions of the world in which the intellect had been active, and had had a career.

'And in these latter days in like manner, outside the Catholic Church, things are tending with far greater rapidity than in that old time, from the circumstances of the age, to Atheism in one shape or another. What a scene, what a prospect does the whole of Europe present at this day! And not only Europe, but every government and every civilization through the world which is under the influence of the European mind. Specially, for it most concerns us, how sorrowful, in the view of religion, even taken in its most elementary, most attenuated form, is the spectacle presented to us by the educated intellect of England, France, and Germany! Lovers of their country and of their race, religious men external to the Catholic Church, have attempted various expedients to arrest fierce human nature in its onward course, and to bring it into subjection. The necessity of some form of religion for the

interests of humanity has been generally acknowledged; but where was the concrete representative of things invisible, which would have the force and the toughness necessary to be a breakwater against the Deluge?

'Three centuries ago, the establishment of religion—material, legal, and social—was generally adopted as the true expedient for the purpose in those countries which separated from the Catholic Church, and for a long time it was successful; but now the crevices of those establishments are admitting the enemy. Thirty years ago[1] education was relied upon. Ten years ago there was a hope that wars would cease for ever, under the influence of commercial enterprise and the reign of the useful and fine arts. But will any one venture to say there is anything anywhere on this earth which will afford a fulcrum for us whereby to keep the earth from moving onwards?

'The judgment which experience passes on establishments, on education, as a means of maintaining religious truth in this anarchical world, must be extended even to Scripture, though Scripture be divine. Experience proves surely that the Bible

[1] This was written in 1865.

does not answer a purpose for which it was never intended. It may be accidentally the means of the conversion of individuals; but a book, after all, cannot make a stand against the wild, living intellect of man; and in this it begins to testify, as regards its own structure and contents, to the power of that universal solvent which is so successfully acting upon religious establishments.

'Supposing, then, it to be the will of the Creator to interfere in human affairs, and to make provision for retaining in this world a knowledge of Himself, so definite and distinct as to be proof against the energy of human scepticism; in such a case—I am far from saying that there was no other way—but there is nothing to surprise the mind, if He should think fit to introduce a power into the world invested with the prerogative of infallibility in religious matters. Such a provision would be a direct, immediate, active, and prompt means of withstanding the difficulty; it would be an instrument suited to the need; and when I find that this is the very claim of the Catholic Church, not only do I feel no difficulty in admitting the idea, but there is a fitness in it which recommends it to my mind. And thus I am brought to speak of the Church's infallibility as a provision adapted by the mercy of the

Creator to preserve religion in the world; and to restrain that freedom of thought which of course in itself is one of the greatest of our natural gifts, and to rescue it from its own suicidal excesses. And let it be observed that neither here nor in what follows shall I have occasion to speak of the revealed body of truths, but only as they bear upon the defence of natural religion. I say that a power possessed of infallibility in religious teaching is happily adapted to be a working instrument in the course of human affairs for smiting hard and throwing back the immense energy of the aggressive intellect; and in saying this, as in the other things that I have to say, it must still be recollected that I am all along bearing in mind my main purpose, which is a defence of myself.'

It has been said that reason is the faculty which finds reasons for what we wish to believe, and the saying is true in so far as it implies that there are in every human being emotional and mental tendencies which suggest the premisses of arguments, dispose the lights and shadows in which external facts shall appear, and make conclusions appear to one person to be satisfactorily made out when to another they shall seem resting upon air. I believe

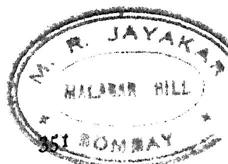
that the passage which you have just read explains Newman's history. When he came to see the condition of the world into which he was thrown the aspect of it was unspeakably distressing. His whole efforts have been spent in finding a solution of the problem which would make existence on such terms less intolerable.

On the same broad ground on which Cardinal Newman places himself, I will shift the lights, and let the shadows fall the other way. Following his own analogy of the outcast boy, I will suppose a reasonable being with faculties limited like ours, with a belief in God like ours, but with no more immediate knowledge, suddenly introduced from another planet into our own earth, confronted with the phenomena which Cardinal Newman describes, and asked for an explanation of them, consistent with his religious conviction. Would such a being infer that the race which he was studying was implicated in some terrible aboriginal calamity? I do not see how the inference would help him. I think if he was wise he would feel his inability to give any explanation at all. But I suppose that before attempting the problem he would look into the past history of the earth, and into the various races of animated beings by which it was occupied.

He would see that man is only the highest of many varieties; that he is made on the same type as a large class of other animals; that as their bodies are a clumsy likeness of man's body, so their minds are a clumsy likeness of the mind. If he looked into the habits of these animals he would find no law among them but violence, no right but strength; no sign of disinterested affection, no object save the gratification of hunger or lust; the will and appetite of each creature only held in check by the will and appetite of other creatures more powerful; one generation exactly like another, with no capacity for looking forward, or accumulating knowledge and experience.

Turning next to man, he would observe, too, that he had the same animal nature. In many countries he would see that the habits of man were scarcely superior to those of the beings below him, that he was savage and ignorant as they, and that his progenitors from immemorial time had lived in the same way. Going back to the earliest traces of human life, the rude flint instruments, the cave-dwellings, and such other memorials as survive, he would infer that the primitive men everywhere had been as the savages are now, the nature which they shared with other animals entirely predominating; that not a vestige was to be found of any

higher civilization which had once existed and had decayed; that the lower animals had come into being for many ages before man; that man himself had risen slowly from the animal's level to the position which he now occupies. Supposing then Cardinal Newman to have drawn a fair picture of the world as it stands at present, would the inquirer be likely to think that the human race was like a boy of whom its parents were ashamed? He would be unable to form the slightest idea why or how such a race had been created; but he would see that in addition to the qualities of other creatures men had capacities of memory, of moral sense and reason; that having been furnished with these capacities, they had been left to raise themselves by their own exertions; and that by fits and starts, sometimes springing forward, sometimes even seeming to recede, they had made their way to their existing state, a state falling far short of imaginary perfection, but far elevated also above the point from which they had set out; the defects only proving that the victory of the higher over the lower nature was still incomplete. He would see that man with all his faults had not only been able to acquire a knowledge of Nature, but had learned to rule the elements, to make the lightning carry his messages, and persuade



fire and water to bear him over sea and land; that he had learnt to rule his own appetites, to form notions of justice, to feel love and compassion, and indignation at wrong; that he had even raised his eyes to heaven, and had formed conceptions which had grown purer and more spiritual as his knowledge extended of his Maker's will and nature.

I am not the least pretending that this has been the actual history of man in this planet, but it is unquestionably the opinion which a stranger would form coming into it from without, and drawing his inferences from the facts which he would find. Far from thinking that the being whose nature he was studying was suffering from some fundamental calamity, he would conclude rather that man was in a state of discipline for the exercise of his powers, and slowly, through conscience and intellect, was rising to a knowledge of God. Man sins, it is true, and sin is an offence against God; but it is an offence only because the being capable of it has acquired a conception of a moral law. By the law sin entered; and the self-reproach of the sinner is the recognition of his obligations. The actions which are sinful in us are not sinful in themselves, but only in reference, as Butler says, to the nature of the agent. Murder and incest, robbery, cunning,

rage, and jealousy are not sinful in animals. They tear each other in pieces, and we find from their anatomical structure that they were intended to do it. Man as an animal inherits the same dispositions; as an intellectual and moral being he has conquered them partially if not yet entirely, and so far from giving signs that he has fallen from any higher state, analogy and reason would rather suggest that he was on the way to a higher state.

This, I say, is the impression which an indifferent spectator would be at least as likely to form about mankind and their situation, as to think with Cardinal Newman that mankind are outcasts, that their intellect was their most dangerous enemy.

Leaving the spectator then, let me go on for myself. Cardinal Newman says that the intellect is naturally sceptical; that it destroyed the faith of the old world; that it is destroying still more rapidly the faith of modern society, and that religion can only be saved by some power which can smite the intellect back and humble it. Is this true? Is it not rather true that the intellect is the enemy only of falsehood? That if it keeps watch over religion, if it is jealous of novelties and unproved assertions, if it instinctively dreads lies, and lies in religion most of all because such lies are most mischievous, it is

because experience has shown that without unceasing watchfulness religion degenerates into superstition, and that of the cankers which corrupt human character superstition is the worst.

Religious knowledge has grown like all other knowledge. Partial truths are revealed or discovered. They are thought to be whole truth, and are consecrated as eternal and complete. We learn better, we find that we were too hasty, and had mistaken our own imaginations for ascertained realities. 'No truth, however sacred,' Cardinal Newman says, 'can stand against the reason in the long run, and hence it is that in the pagan world, when our Lord came, the last traces of the religious knowledge of former times was all but disappearing from those portions of the world where the intellect was active and had had a career.' What is the fact? In the early stages of the Greek and Roman nations certain opinions had been formed about the gods; and certain religious services had been instituted. In these traditions there was much that was grand and beautiful; there was much also that was monstrous and incredible. As civilization developed itself both conscience and intellect protested and declared that the pagan theology could not be wholly true. If the Olympian gods existed, they were not beings whom

it was possible to reverence; and the established creed having broken down, men were left face to face with nature, to learn from fact what the Divine administration of this world really was. They might be at a loss for an answer, and the grosser natures among them might be demoralized by absolute unbelief; but the difficulty itself had risen not from impiety but from piety. They had become too enlightened to attribute actions to the gods which they despised or condemned in one another. Was this scepticism? It was a scepticism then which was shared by the apostles, who called the heathen gods devils. As Tennyson says—

> There lies more faith in honest doubt,
> Believe me, than in half the creeds.

The unbelief in the Roman Empire, when our Lord came, was a *Præparatio Evangelica.* Great and good men disbelieved, not because they hated religion and wished to be rid of it, but because they would not call evil good, nor paradox a sacred mystery. The recognition that certain things were not true was the first step towards acceptance of what was true; and the ready hearing which Christianity met with proves the eagerness with which light was being looked for.

Horace is a typical Roman of the intellectual sort,

an Epicurean, and an unbeliever in the established religion. Horace says—

> Dis te minorem quod geris, imperas.
> Hinc omne principium, huc refer exitum.
> Di multa neglecti dederunt
> Hesperiæ mala luctuosæ.

This is not the language of acquiescence in atheism. Christianity grew because the soil was ready prepared, because the intellect 'had had a career,' and had broken the back of superstition. The teachers of a new religion would have had but a short shrift in the days when Calchas could sacrifice Iphigenia. Special doctrines of the Christian faith had even begun to form independent of it. In Cæsar's time few cultivated men believed in a future life. Under the Antonines the most intellectual men of their age had come to believe it; and intellect had led them to the gate of the Christian Church. As it was in the first century so it had been in the sixteenth. Again the truth had been crusted over with fictions. Again the intellect rose in protest, and declared that incredibilities should not be taught any longer. But they cleared away the falsehood as they broke the painted windows in the churches, only that the clear light of heaven might shine the brighter. Even Cardinal

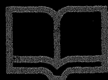
Newman himself has been, perhaps unwillingly, under the same influence. He professes horror at the thought of an auto-da-fè, and personally is unable to believe that such offerings could be approved of by such a being as he supposes God to be. But these 'acts of faith' were once regarded as righteous and necessary by the infallible authority which is to prevent us from thinking for ourselves.

The human intellect, I believe, will never voluntarily part with truth which has been once communicated. It hates lies, lies especially which come to it armed with terror in the place of argument. Possibly, in some instances, when it has found truth itself in bad company, its suspicions may have been roused without occasion. Falsehood, it has been said, is no match for truth, but it may be more than a match for truth and authority combined. Between men of intellect and priesthoods there has seldom been good agreement. Each regards the other as intruding upon his special domain. Priests and prophets went on ill together under the old dispensation. The prophet denounced the priest as a ritualist. The priest murdered the prophet with the help of popular superstition.

But Cardinal Newman tells us that intellect is unbelieving, that it needs to be smitten back and

estranged from the world. He takes pity on its lost state by establishing in the Church a special representative of Himself. We know how it is with mankind generally, from the want of religion which appears in their conduct. If the Church is to show us how to live better, we may, we must, expect to find in the Church not a teacher only but an example, for if it be no better than the world, then we have the same reason for supposing God to be estranged from the Church. Cardinal Newman refers us especially to the condition of the countries which separated from Rome in the sixteenth century. Are the countries which remained in the Papal communion superior morally to those who left it? The bishops and priests had the education of France entirely in their hands after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. The result was the generation who made the Reign of Terror and abolished Christianity. Germany and England and America are not all which they ought to be; but is Catholic Ireland much better, or Catholic Spain? or Italy, which till a few years ago was more Catholic than either of them?

We have Church history, for now eighteen





hundred years; or, if we choose to put it so, from the constitution of the Israelite nationality. What the Israelites were their own records testify. So far as conduct went they were like other nations. They had good kings and bad, good priests and bad, true prophets and false. They had their periods of idolatry. They had their periods of outward repentance and ceremonial punctiliousness. But when truth came among them, they had no special power of recognizing it, nor special will to welcome it. The heads of the Church rejected our Lord: the publicans and sinners received him. Of the ten lepers who were cleansed nine went to the priests: one only gave glory to God, and he was a Samaritan. The priest and Levite passed by the wounded man; the Samaritan had mercy on him. In Christian times the depositories of the infallibility which is to keep intellect in order have been the popes and bishops, speaking through their councils and acting through the ecclesiastical courts. When we look into the accounts of what these persons were, we find the same inequalities which are to be met with in all combinations of men, and in all human institutions; here, as elsewhere, we find saints and sinners: in one generation noble endeavours after holiness; in another worldliness, luxury,

intrigue, ambition, tyranny, even ferocious cruelty. Unless Catholic writers have combined to calumniate their mistress, Rome was as venal under the popes as Jugurtha found her under the Republic; and the Church courts were a byword for iniquity in every country in Europe. The religious orders, which were founded expressly to exhibit a pattern of saintly life, became too corrupt to be allowed to continue in existence. When the printing-press was invented, and the Bible came to be read by the people, the contrast was so violent between religion as exhibited in the New Testament and religion as taught and exercised by the infallible Church that half Europe broke away from it. Cardinal Newman's theory implies that the Reformation was the rebellion of the intellect against the spiritual authority which was in charge of it. The authority must have done its work but ill if it had bred a generation of apostates. The Holy See when it found its power endangered behaved as ordinary human potentates behave on such occasions, and potentates not of the best kind. She filled Europe with wars. She stirred princes to massacre their subjects. The rack, the gibbet, and the stake were her instruments of persuasion as long as she had strength to use them. When her strength began to fail, she tried conspiracy

and murder; and only now, in these later times, when the despised intellect has created a tribunal to which she is answerable in the public opinion of mankind, has she reformed her own manners and attempted to explain away her atrocities.

Well for her that these sad methods have been abandoned. Were the Church to treat but one man or woman in these days of ours as three centuries ago she treated tens of thousands, she would be rent in pieces by the common indignation of the entire human race. As it is she remains doing the work which is still appointed for her. But if an institution with such a history behind it is an exceptional instrument to bear witness to God's existence; if it be the voice through which alone He speaks to man, and makes known His nature and His will; then the attempt to understand this world, and what goes on in it, had better be abandoned in despair.

ORIGEN AND CELSUS.

WHEN the seed of the forest tree begins to germinate, and the cotyledons burst their ligaments and lift themselves into light, the growing plant thenceforward gathers its nutriment out of *the air*. The massive trunk of the oak which has stood for a thousand years, is composed chiefly of vapours absorbed through the leaves and organized into fibre by the cunning chemistry of nature. Some few mineral substances enter into its composition, and are taken up out of the soil through the roots. But these grosser elements are slight in comparison with those of more ethereal origin; how slight, may be measured by the handful of dust which remains when the log has been consumed in the furnace, and the carbon and hydrogen have returned to the source from whence they came. An animal is formed of the same materials, and is developed by analogous laws. A single cell with the force called life in it

collects a congregation of gaseous atoms, and out of the atoms fashions a man. Men, again, are taken hold of by a further action of the living principle, and are formed into families and nations, societies and institutions; each held together by vital force, and dissolving when the force disappears. But all of them, individuals and nations alike, are made out of atoms lent to them for a while out of the aërial envelope of the globe, to be reclaimed after a brief incarnation. The smallest urn suffices to preserve such remnants of a man as cannot be decomposed into vapour.

Spiritual organizations are the counterpart of the material. Intellect and imagination are for ever scattering in millions the seeds of aspirations or speculations. From time to time some one out of these millions is 'brought to bear,' and becomes a theory of politics, a system of philosophy, a tradition, a poem, or a creed. The idea is the life; the organized form is assimilated out of the opinions and desires already floating in the minds of mankind. Some root in fact there may be. But the facts which can be seen, and handled, and verified by experience, are infinitesimally small. Accidental conditions may be needed to quicken an idea into an active force. But when once the idea has begun to

grow, and organic tissue to be formed, the sole source of nourishment is again the spiritual—*air*.

It was once supposed that man was made of clay; that all things which had visible form and bulk were formed out of elements possessing a property of solidity; that air could not become solid, nor solids become air; and much illusory physiology was based on this hypothesis. There has been similar waste of labour and ingenuity in looking for historical facts as the basis of national traditions. The facts which we discover will not account for the consequences which seemed to grow of them. The Romans traced their Romulus to the gods; the modern popular historian regards Romulus as a robber shepherd; but he has still to explain whence the idea came which developed the shepherd's descendants into an imperial race; and when he looks for his reasons in the 'soil,' in the circumstances of their situation, he is like a man who would find the secret of the tree in its ashes, or would explain the lifting of the Himalayas by a force which would not elevate a mole-heap. The philosophy of history is gradually discerning that the amount of fact discoverable in early legends is extremely small, and that when discovered it is extremely unimportant. Legends are perceived to have risen out of the minds, and characters, and

purposes of the people to whom they belong, and are only interesting as they show what those minds, and characters, and purposes were. In like manner, theological critics are throwing away valuable effort over the facts supposed to underlie the origin of Christianity. They forget the simile of the grain of mustard-seed to which the kingdom of heaven was compared by Christ himself; and they seek for the living in the dead. They sift the Gospel to separate the true from the false. They desire to ascertain precisely the events which occurred in Palestine eighteen or nineteen centuries ago; and such events as survive the process, and can be accepted after passing through the critical crucible, will be but ash or charred cinders. The truth, as it was, can never be discovered. The historical inquirer can look only through the eyes of the early Christian writers; and those writers neither saw as he sees, nor judged as he judges. The historical inquirer sees with the eye of reason; the early Christian saw with the eye of faith. The historical inquirer is impartial; the early Christian was enthusiastic and prepossessed. The historical inquirer demands evidence such as would satisfy a British jury in a criminal case; to the early Christian the life, and death, and resurrection of Christ were their own evidence, each detail of

it the symbol of some spiritual reality, and every event of it intrinsically probable as it availed for the edification and elevation of the human soul. Thus the data do not exist to establish an evidential conclusion. The early Christians did not inquire, and therefore have left no record of inquiry. St. Paul was converted by a vision. The vision was sufficient for him, and he pointedly abstained from examining witnesses or strengthening his conviction by outward testimony. To us the ultimate fact is the existence of belief—belief created by such evidence as was convincing to the minds of the first converts. The evidence was sufficient for them, but they did not argue as we argue; their methods of inference were not our methods of inference; we can see only Christianity coming into existence as a living force; and, as of the oak tree, we do not ask, Is it true, or is it false? we ask, Is it alive? so with Christianity, we see a spiritual germ, quickened suddenly into active being, which grew and took possession of the human race, overthrowing every other force with which it came into collision, and eventually revolutionizing the entire character of human thought and energy. Life is not truth merely, but it is, as Plato says, *τὸ ἐπίκεινα τῆς ἀληθείας*, something above truth and more than truth; a force in visible operation which

remains a mystery to the intellect; and it is immortal not as the properties of the circle are immortal, but as it propagates itself in eternal descent, body after body which it has animated successively perishing, but for ever reorganizing itself anew in fresh and developed forms. The individual oak tree grows old. Its functions become torpid. Its boughs clothe themselves more scantily with leaves. It ceases to expand. At length it decays and is resolved into the elements. But it has dropped its acorns from its branches, and in the acorn it lives again, in a new body, the essential qualities unchanged, the unessential and accidental passing away into other combinations. The Christianity of the first century was, and yet was not, the Christianity of the fourth century. The Christianity of the fourth century was, and yet was not, the Christianity of feudal Europe. The Christianity of feudal Europe died at the Reformation, and was born again in Protestant Christianity. Even things which we call dead are still subject to the eternal laws of change. Forces are for ever at work, integrating and disintegrating the atoms of which the inorganic world is composed. Only in the intellectual abstractions of geometry, or in numbers which have no existence save in the conceptions of the intellect

do we find propositions of which we can predicate with certainty unalterable truth. Whatever has its being in time and space is under the conditions of transiency; but the transient is interpenetrated with life; every living thought which has quickened into vital organization, and has developed into flower and fruit, renews its energies while time endures; and, in the strictest sense of the words, the gates of death do not prevail against it.

Religion as a rule of life, neither is, nor can be, a record of events which once occurred on a corner of this planet. It is the expression and statement of our duties to one another, and of our relations to the Soverign Power which has called us into existence. And these duties and these relations are not conditions which once were or which will be hereafter. They are conditions of our present being, as much as what we call the laws of nature. For the laws of bodily health we are not dependent on the observations of Galen, or the history of the plague at Athens. We learn from present experience, as Galen himself learnt, and we refer to the records of the past only as a single chapter in the vast volume of our instructions. The evidence of the truth of religion is not the testimony of this or that person who saw, or thought he saw,

long ago, something which seemed to him an indication of a supernatural presence. The evidence is the power which lies in a religion to cope with moral disease, to conquer and bind the brutal appetites and intellectual perversities of man, and to lift him out of grossness and self-indulgence into higher and nobler desires. This was what Christianity effected as no creed or system of philosophy ever did before or has done since, and Christianity was thus, as Goethe declares, beyond comparsion the grandest work which was ever accomplished by humanity. It is a height, he says, from which, having once risen to it, mankind can never again descend; and thus of all studies the most interesting to us is that of the conditions under which so extraordinary a force developed itself.

Within historical times the earth has never seen—let us hope it may never see again—such a condition of human society as prevailed in the Roman Empire during the centuries which elasped between the Crucifixion and the conversion of Constantine. When we look back over distant periods the landscape is foreshortened, and we discern but the elevated features of it. The long level intervals, where common life was the most busy, are lost to us almost entirely. We have the

of questionable palace ladies, of intriguing favourites, and ambitious statesmen; we see the dagger, cord, or poison cup which removed prince after prince to make room for his successor with horrid uniformity. We read of invasions by barbarians, of fierce battles on the Danube, or the Euphrates, and the frontier advancing or receding. The units which form the sum of mankind we do not see; they are of small significance save to themselves and their families. In hundreds of millions they play their little parts upon the stage, and pass away and are forgotten because no one cares to notice or speak of them. Yet it is of these multitudes that humanity consists, and by the thoughts obscurely working in the minds of them the destinies of humanity are eventually controlled. In the centuries of which I speak ten generations of men were born and lived and died. The empire was sprinkled with cities, towns, villages, and farmsteads, all thronged like anthills, and in a fair state of outward civilization. Political discontent was rare and easily suppressed. Order was moderately maintained, and was disturbed only by occasional bands of robbers. Men of fortune resided on their estates, shot and

hunted, went to the watering-places in hot weather, and kept their yachts. Merchants and manufacturers made money. Artisans and shopkeepers pursued their various trades. Peasants tilled their wheatfields or their vineyards. Schoolmasters or family tutors drilled the boys. State-paid professors taught in the universities. Philosophers wrangled. Priests presided in the shrines and temples, and held processions and celebrations on holydays. Peace, quiet, industry was everywhere, with an air of grace and harmonious culture; and below the surface was a condition of morality, at least among the educated classes, which words cannot describe or modern imagination realize. Moral good and moral evil were played with as fancies in the lecture-rooms; but they were fancies merely, with no bearing on life. The one practical belief was that pleasure was pleasant. By pleasure was meant the indulgence of the senses; and the supremest enjoyment which art and philosophy combined to recommend, was the most loathsome and unmentionable of vices. The poor may have been protected from the worst contamination by the necessities of hard work, the ignorant by the simplicity of their understanding. But so far as culture 'cast its shadow,' the very memory disappeared that there was any evil except

bodily pain, or any good save in sensuality. The supreme deity led the way in impurity. The inferior divinities followed the example, which descended from them into the palace of the emperors. Adrian and Antinous were but another, and alas! more real, Zeus and Ganymede. The Stoics preached austerity; the Academics, virtue; the Platonists, the aspiration after the ideal. Stoics, Academics, Platonists were as vicious in practice as the pampered legionary who scoffed at their speculations. In the schools of Athens, where the most gifted youths in the Empire came to be educated in the worship of the beautiful, the professors illustrated their lessons by the practical corruption of their pupils. Freely as Lucian scattered his sarcasms over all classes of society except the lowest, he reserves his choicest arrows for the philosophers. Of all kinds of men who had fallen under the range of Lucian's eye, the philosophers were the worst. The nearest in infamy after them, and but a single degree better, were the priests and ministers of the established religion. Men of ability had longed ceased to believe in the Olympian gods. Men of ability, Epicureans all or most of them, believed in nature and natural laws. They believed in experience, they believed in what their senses told them—what lay beyond they regarded as a

dream. But religion was still a convenient instrument to preserve the peace of the Empire. The majority of mankind were fools, and would continue fools. The belief in imaginary supernatural beings, who might reward or punish in another world, was a check on the passions of the strong, a consolation to the weak in their sufferings. Even if superstition was mischievous in itself it could not be eradicated. The accepted traditions therefore were preserved and treated with affected respect. The more outrageous features were softened into allegory. The new creeds and deities with which the spread of the Empire brought the Romans in contact were protected and patronized, and enthusiasm and religious excitement were allowed to play within reasonable limits. The mysteries of Ceres and Dionysus superseded the old temple worship. Serapis was admitted to equality with the Olympians. The Cæsars were taken into heaven and carried up their favourites with them. For the most part there was an outward show of decency, but the creed was a conscious imposture. The ceremonial became infected more and more with the general impurity, and the Mysteries, which perhaps originally arose from a desire for something purer and better, became a veil at last for the most detestable orgies. When

Adrian's 'favourite' Antinous died, the Egyptians built a town and shrine in his honour, and Antinopolis became a scene of miracles as constant as those at Lourdes. At this point religion had perhaps reached its nadir—lower than this it has never descended upon earth. The degradation was now as complete as the genius of evil could make it. The shocked conscience of mankind, never wholly extinct, was already kindling into resentment; and as in political catastrophes revolution is nearest when tyranny is at its worst, so in moral putrefaction the germs are quickening of a new order of things. There is this difference only, that the overthrow of a government is swift and sudden; the regeneration of character is slow and deliberate. Political convictions disappoint expectation. The enthusiasm of revolt is a conflagration which expires when the fuel is consumed. A religious revolution advances steadily in the hearts of mankind, and each step that is gained is a conquest finally achieved. Lucian was able to see that some vast religious change was approaching; but Lucian could not discern the direction from which it was coming. Christianity was working in a sphere too low for him. Spiritual regeneration begins naturally among the poor and the humble, for it begins in the strata of

society which are least corrupt. First individuals are found intent on reforming their own wretched lives, with no thought of converting the world. Individuals gather circles about them. The circles spread and lay down rules for themselves and simple formulas of doctrine. The material lies scattered everywhere ready to organize. The supreme idea which can assimilate it is found at last, but not immediately. There are false starts: spurious seed is sown with the good, and springs up as weeds. Tentatively, gradually, and after severe competition, the fittest survives.

From the moment of the final conquest of Asia by the Romans, when the Asiatic and European philosophers were brought in contact, an intellectual fermentation had been active. Theosophic theories were formed in infinite variety, some fanciful and withering in a season; some strong, like Manicheism, and protracting a vigorous existence for centuries. Enthusiasts, impostors, prophets started up, 'boasting themselves to be somebody.' Enchanters, magicians, necromancers, dealers with spirits were everywhere making fame and fortune out of sick souls pining for knowledge of the invisible world. The most illustrious of these Cagliostros of the old world, Apollonius of Tyana and Alexander of Abonitichus, blazed into a splendour which shone over the whole Empire.

Into the midst of this strange scene of imposture, profligacy, enthusiasm, and craving for light, Christianity emerged out of Palestine with its message of lofty humility. The quack prophets claimed to be gods or sons of God. They carried their credentials with them in the form of pomp and power. They worked miracles, they invited fools to worship them, and in return they promised the faithful infinite rewards of gold and pleasure. The teachers of Christianity called themselves also apostles of a son of God; but their Son of God was a village carpenter, who had lived in sorrow and had died on the cross, and their message was a message never heard before on earth. It was to invite their fellow-men to lead new lives, to put away sin, to separate themselves from the abominations of the world, to care nothing for wealth and to be content with poverty, to aim only at overcoming, each for himself, his own sensuality and selfishness; to welcome pain, want, disease, everything which the world most shrank from, if it would assist him in self-conquest, and to expect no reward, at least in this life, save the peace which would arise from the consciousness that he was doing what God had commanded.

Such a message naturally found readiest accept-

ance among those whom ignorance had protected from philosophy; who had lived in hardship, and had been least enervated by what was called pleasure. Rich men could not easily abandon substantial enjoyments in pursuit of so imaginary an object as the elevation of their characters. Men of intellect had heard too much of sons of God, and had seen too many of them, to attach significance to the alleged appearance of another in Judæa.

The early Christian converts were those who had little to part with, whose experiences of life were hard already, and who found the hardness of their lot made more bearable by the knowledge that want and sorrow were no evils, and might be actually good for them. Intellectually they were called on to believe nothing which in itself was difficult. Such men knew nothing of science or of laws of nature. The world as they knew it was a world already full of signs and wonders. There was nothing wonderful in the coming to earth of a Son of God, for the Jews had been told to expect Him; and the Gentiles believed that He had come in the person of Augustus Cæsar. A miracle was as little improbable in itself as any other event. The heroes had risen from the dead, and ascended into heaven, and were seen as stars nightly in the

believed, was that the spirits with whose operations they had been hitherto familiar, were evil or mischievous spirits, or spirits at best indifferent to good. In the new revelation the spirits of God were seen taking part in the direction of human affairs, and defeating the powers of darkness in their own world. Thus the doctrine announced was precisely of the kind which the hearers were prepared to receive; and it was preached in perfect good faith, because the teachers were on the same intellectual level with their audience. They were men of noble natural disposition, natural gifts, natural purity of mind, but they were unlearned. They knew nothing of science or art, and with the exception of St. Paul, nothing of literature, nothing of politics, nothing of the world around them. St. Paul had been well educated, yet his scientific knowledge had been carried only far enough to betray him into error, when he illustrated the resurrection of the body from the growth of a grain of wheat, which he supposed to die and rise again. Contemporary naturalists were as well aware then as now, that if the grain was dead it would not rise again.

In its earliest stages the Church absorbed the

common superstitions of its day; as converts multiplied, the circle of its horizon widened, and it gathered into itself and remodelled after its own likeness the prevailing speculations of the times and the prevailing practices. The birth of Christ was fixed at the winter solstice, when already a universal festival was held for the birth of the sun and the beginning of the new year. In place of the heathen mysteries there were the Christian mysteries of the Sacraments. Philosophers said that the root of evil lay in matter; that the appetites which led to sin were affections of the flesh, which lusted against the spirit. Christianity accepted the theory, explained the fact by Adam's fall, and found a remedy in the virgin-born body of Christ, which, being generated free from the effects of Adam's sin, resumed its purity, became the mystical body of the Church, and the food, through transubstantiation, of the believer. The Trinity was taken over from the Platonists, who had already shaped it into form. A strange and painful opinion had spread out of Phœnicia over the Greek and Roman world, that the gods required, as a condition of any special favour, the sacrifice of some pure and innocent human victim. This dark belief had been the growth of comparatively recent centuries, but it was

laying hold on the popular mind with increasing fascination. It could not be eradicated, and it was reconciled to the conscience in the doctrine of the Christian atonement. Every popular idea, every speculation floating in the spiritual sky, was thus successively seized, and, like a cloud reversed, was transformed into an image of beauty. The chambers of the mind were not remodelled, but for each impure or frightful occupant, some new inmate, some pure and elevating spiritual symbol, was substituted, intellectually analogous, and every function of human nature—heart, conscience, reason, imagination—was gradually enlisted in the war against moral evil.

The ages differ one from another: the believing and the scientific eras succeed each other as systole and diastole in the progress of human development. In believing eras, nations form themselves on heroic traditions. Legends shape themselves into poetry, and aspirations after beauty and goodness bloom out into art and religion. Scientific eras bring us back to reality and careful knowledge of facts; but scepticism is fatal to the enthusiasm which produces saints, and poets, and heroes. There would have been no 'Iliad' in an age which inquired into the evidence for the real existence of Priam or Achilles. There

are two kinds of truth: there is the general truth, the truth of the idea, which forms the truth of poetry; there is the literal truth of fact, which is the truth of science and history. They correspond to opposite tendencies in human nature, and never as yet have been found to thrive together.

Without inquiry, without hesitation, by force of natural affinity, Christianity grew and spread over the Empire, and as surely there went with it and flowed out of it a complete revolution in the relative estimate of the value of human things. To a Roman or a Greek the greatest of evils had been pain; to the Christian the greatest of evils was sin. The gods of Paganism were called blessed, and were said to be perfectly happy; but they were happy because they were unrestrained and could do whatever they pleased. The God of Christianity was absolute perfection, and perfection meant perfect obedience to law. From the lowest fibre of its roots, the nature of a Christian—heart, intellect, imagination—underwent a complete transformation, a transformation which, if real, no intelligent person could deny to be a change from a worse condition to a better; and it might have been expected that the Roman emperors would have given a warm welcome to the power which was effecting such an alteration, if on no

enmity to Christianity a characteristic of the best emperors, not of the worst? Why do we find the darkest persecution in the reign, not of a Domitian or a Commodus, but under the mild, just rule of a Trajan, a Marcus Aurelius, a Severus, or a Diocletian?

No more valuable addition could be made to theological history than an account of the impression made by Christianity on the minds of cultivated Romans of the highest order of ability, while its message was still new, before long acceptance had made its strangest features familiar, and before the powers which it eventually exerted commanded attention and respect. Few such men, unfortunately, condescended to examine its nature with serious care. Tacitus, Pliny, Lucian, glanced at the Christians with contemptuous pity, as victims of one more of the unaccountable illusions to which mankind were subject. They were confounded at first with the Jews; and the Jews, as the Romans had found to their cost, were troublesome fanatics whom it was equally difficult to govern or destroy. When the political constitution of a nation is abolished, its lands taken

from it and its people scattered, the atoms are usually absorbed into other combinations, and the nation ceases to exist. The Romans made an end of Jerusalem; they levelled the Temple with the ground; so far as force could do it, they annihilated the Jewish nationality. They were no nearer their end than when they began. The bond of coherence was not political but religious, and the Jewish communities dispersed throughout the Empire burst occasionally into furious insurrections, and were a constant subject of anxiety and alarm. The Jews proper, however, were relatively few; they made no proselytes, and could be controlled; but there had come out from them a sect which was spreading independent of local associations, making converts in every part of the world. If not Jews, they were wonderfully like Jews; a proselytizing religion was a new phenomenon; and in an empire so little homogeneous as the Roman an independent organization of any kind was an object of suspicion when it grew large enough to be observed. The Christians, too, were bad citizens, refusing public employment and avoiding service in the army; and while they claimed toleration for their own creed, they had no toleration for others; every god but their own they openly called a devil, and so long as religion was

maintained by the State, and the Empire was administered with religious forms, direct insults to the gods could not readily be permitted. Their organization was secret, and their allegiance ambiguous, since they refused to take the customary oaths; while doubtless to intelligent men, who were looking to the growth of accurate scientific knowledge for the amelioration of mankind, the appearance of a new and vigorous superstition was provoking and disappointing. All this we see, yet it still leaves much unexplained. It fails to show us the motives which led Marcus Aurelius to persecute men whom his own principles must have compelled him to admire. Some further insight may be gained, however, from the fragments of a once celebrated work called 'A True Account,' which have been preserved by Origen in his answer to it. The author of this work is believed to be a distinguished Roman named Celsus, Marcus Aurelius's contemporary. The book itself is lost. Nothing remains of it save the passages which Origen extracted that he might refute them; and thus we have no complete account of what Celsus said. We have, like the geologist, to restore an extinct organization out of the fossils of an imperfect skeleton. But the attempt is worth making. The remains of this lost production exhibit

most curiously the relations of the Christianity of the second century to the intellectual culture of the time, and the causes, neither few nor insignificant, which prevented men of high character and attainments from embracing or approving it.

Of Celsus personally not much is known. He was an Epicurean in opinion and belief; but the habits of men were not governed by their philosophy, nor did the name bear at that time the meaning which now attaches to it. The Epicurean under Marcus Aurelius was the man of science, and of Celsus we gather generally that he was a clear-sighted, honest, proud, and powerful-minded man, unlikely to concern himself with vice and folly. His method of thought was scientific in the strictest modern sense. He disbelieved evidently that the order of nature was ever interrupted by supernatural interference. He had assured himself that every phenomenon in the moral or material world was the sequel of a natural cause. Epicurius had taught him that constant unvarying laws, or groups of laws, prevailed throughout the universe, that what appeared to be chance was only the action of forces not yet known to us, and that every alleged miracle performed either by God, angel, devil, or art magic, was a false interpretation of some natural pheno-

menon, misinterpreted by ignorance or misrepresented by imposture. He considered that human affairs could be best ordered by attention and obedience to the teaching of observed facts, and that superstition, however accredited by honourable objects or apparent good effects, could only be mischievous in the long run. Sorcerers, charlatans, enthusiasts, were rising thick on all sides, pretending a mission from the invisible world. Of such men and such messages Celsus and his friends were inexorable antagonists. The efforts of their lives were directed to saving mankind from becoming the victims of a new cycle of folly. He himself had written an elaborate treatise, which has been lost, like his other writings, against the Eastern magicians. Lucian dedicated to him his exposure of Alexander of Abonitichus, the most impudent and the most successful of the enchanters of the second century. 'This sketch,' says Lucian, in the closing lines, 'I have determined to address to you, my dear sir, both to give you pleasure as a person whom I hold in especial honour for the wisdom, truthfulness, gentleness, justice, composure, and uprightness, which you have displayed in your general conduct, and, again, which I think will gratify you even more, in vindication of our master, Epicurus, who was a saint

indeed; who was inspired in the highest sense; who alone combined, and taught others to combine, the good with the true, and was thus the deliverer and the saviour of those who would consent to learn from him.'

In this spirit Celsus composed his ἀληθὴς λόγος, his 'True Account,' against the Christians, in connection, apparently, from the political character of its concluding passages, with the efforts of Marcus Aurelius to suppress them. The book was powerful and popular, and it proved a real obstacle to the spread of Christianity among the educated classes. Eighty years[1] at least after its publication the Church found it necessary to reply, and Origen, the most gifted and accomplished of the Christian fathers, was selected for the task. Origen's answer decided the controversy in the Church's favour; but in the reconsideration of the theological position which has been forced upon the modern world, what Celsus had to say has become of peculiar interest to us, and I have endeavoured to reconstruct, in outline, his principal positions. His arguments lie under every disadvantage; the order is disarranged; the

[1] That is, if the opinion generally received is correct, that the Celsus who composed the ἀληθὴς λόγος was Lucian's friend. But the evidence is not entirely conclusive.

objections are presented sometimes in his own words, sometimes in paraphrases and epitomes, and are brought forward in the attitude in which they could be most easily overthrown. Often we are left to discover what he must have said from the details of the rejoinder. His antagonist was totally without humour, and when Celsus was speaking in irony or condescending to prevailing weaknesses, Origen supposed him to be giving his serious opinion; and again, a mind intensely earnest and religious is unfitted by its very nature to comprehend scientific modes of thought. Yet Origen was too high a man to condescend to wilful misrepresentation, or to do less than his very best to exhibit faithfully the lines which he assailed. Notwithstanding these inevitable drawbacks, a fair conception can still be formed of the once celebrated 'True Account.'

The writer of it commences, or seems to commence, by saying that he does not condemn the Christians for the secrecy of their rites or for their barbarous origin. Secrecy was forced on them by their position, and a foreign extraction was not in itself a crime. There was nothing censurable in their lives or habits, or in their refusal to worship statues made by human artists, or to believe the legends of the Grecian gods. Their fault was that

they had erected a new superstition of their own, which they maintained by the arts of common charlatans. A belief, Celsus admitted, was not to be abandoned because the profession of it was dangerous. A man with a *soul* in him longed necessarily for the truth, loved God above all things, and desired only to know what God was and what God willed. But he must take his intellect along with him, or he might fall into folly and extravagance; and Celsus complained that the Christians would neither reason nor listen to reason. 'Inquire nothing,' they said. 'Believe, and your faith will save you. The world's wisdom is evil, and the world's foolishness is insight.'

Their origin, according to Celsus, was tolerably well known. There were certain traditions common to all nations respecting the creation of the world. These traditions Moses became acquainted with in Egypt. Moses, who was probably a magician, introduced into them variations of his own. From Egypt he borrowed various religious rites. A number of shepherds took him for their leader, and, under his guidance, they professed a belief in one God, whom they called 'the Most High,' or Adonai, or God of Sabaoth, or of Heaven. By these names they meant the Universe, or what the Greeks called

τὸν ἐπὶ πᾶσι Θεόν, the God over all. Hence came the Jewish nation, and from among them, now in these late years, there had risen a second prophet, who was called 'the Son of God.'

The majority of the Jews themselves had not admitted the pretensions of the new claimant, and to explain the reason of their refusal Celsus introduces an orthodox Jew, whom he represents as thus addressing Christ:—

'You were born in a small Jewish village. Your mother was a poor woman who earned her bread by spinning. Her husband divorced her for adultery You were born in secret and were afterwards carried to Egypt, and were bred up among the Egyptian conjurers. The arts which you there learnt, you practised when you returned to your own people, and you thus persuaded them that you were God. It was given out that you were born of a virgin. Your real father was a soldier, named Panther.[1] The story of your Divine parentage is like the story of Danaë. You say that when you were baptized in Jordan a dove descended upon you, and that a voice was heard from heaven declaring that you were the

[1] Epiphanius says that Joseph's father was called Panther. John of Damascus says that Panther was Mary's grandfather. The Talmud says that he was Mary's husband.

Son of God. Who saw the dove? Who heard the voice, except you and another who suffered as you suffered? The prophets have foretold that a Son of God is to come. Granted. But how are we to know that they referred to you? They spoke of a glorious king who was to reign over the world. You we know only as wandering about with publicans and boatmen of abandoned character.[1] You tell us that the wise men of the East came at your birth to adore you;[2] that they gave notice to Herod, and that Herod killed all the children in Bethlehem, to prevent you from becoming king. You yourself escaped by going to Egypt. Is this story true? and if it be, could not the angels who had been busy about your birth have protected you at home? When you grew up, what did you accomplish remarkable? What did you say? We challenged you in the Temple to give us a sign as your credential. You had none to give. You cured diseases, it is said; you restored dead bodies to life;

[1] Origen thinks that Celsus must have gathered this from an Epistle of Barnabas, where the Apostles are spoken of as ὑπὲρ πᾶσαν ἁμαρτίαν ἀνομώτεροι.

[2] Origen says the wise men were magicians. Their power depended on some spirit or spirits. It ceased suddenly when Christ was born, and they thus knew that something wonderful had happened.

you fed multitudes with a few loaves. These are the common tricks of the Egyptian wizards, which you may see performed every day in our markets for a few halfpence. They, too, drive out devils, heal sicknesses, call up the souls of the dead, provide suppers and tables covered with dishes, and make things seem what they are not. We do not call these wizards sons of God; we call them rogues and vagabonds.'

The Jew then turns to his converted countrymen.

'What madness can have possessed you,' he says, 'to leave the law of your fathers? Can you conceive that we, who were looking for the coming of the Messiah, should not have recognized him had this been he? His own followers even were not convinced, or they would not have betrayed and deserted him. If he could not persuade those who daily saw and spoke with him, shall he convince you now that he is gone? He suffered, you pretend, to destroy the power of evil. Have there been no other sufferers? Was he the only one? He worked miracles, you say, he healed the lame and the blind, he brought the dead to life. But, oh light and truth, did he not himself tell you, is it not written in your own books, that miracles could be worked by impostors? He calls

Satan a master of such arts, so that he admits himself that they are no evidence of divine action. Are you to argue from the same works that one man is God, and another a servant of Satan? Why is one a servant of Satan more than the other? To what can you appeal? You say he prophesied that he would himself rise from the dead, and he did rise. The same is said of many besides him. Zamolxis told the Scythians that he had come back from the dead. So Pythagoras told the Italians. Rhampsinitus pretended to have played dice with Ceres in Hell, and he showed a golden handkerchief which Ceres had given to him. Orpheus, Protesilaus, Hercules, Theseus, all are said to have died and risen again. But did any one ever really rise?—really?—in the body in which he had lived? Or shall we say that all these stories are fables, but that yours is true? Who saw your prophet after he rose? an hysterical woman or some of his own companions who dreamt of him or were deluded by their enthusiasm. All the world were witnesses of his death. Why were none but his friends witnesses of his resurrection? Had he desired to prove that he was God, he should have appeared to his accusers and his judge, or he should have vanished from the cross. We hope that we shall rise again in our

bodies and have eternal life, that he will be a guide and example in the resurrection, and that one who is to come will prove that with God nothing is impossible. Where is your prophet now? that we may see and believe. Did he come among us that we might reject him? He was a man—such a man as truth shows him to have been and common sense declares.'

So far the Jew; but after all, says Celsus, now speaking in his own person, the controversy between Jews and Christians is but for the proverbial 'ass's shadow;' for both agree that the human race is to be redeemed by a Saviour from heaven; the only question between them is about the person of this Saviour.

The Jews were a tribe of Egyptians who revolted from the established religion. The Christians have revolted in turn from them, and the cause in both cases has been the same—a seditious and revolutionary temper. So long as the Christians were few there was tolerable agreement among them. As their numbers extended the mutinous spirit displayed itself. Sect has formed after sect, each condemning the other, till they have little left but the name in common. Their faith rests on nothing but their hopes and fears, and they have invented the most

extraordinary terrors. God forbid that they, or I, or any man, should cease to believe that wicked men will be punished hereafter and good men rewarded.[1] But the Christians have taken this ancient doctrine, and distorted its meaning, and now howl it out like the Corybantes, as if no one had ever heard of it before. Their creed preserves its original Egyptian stamp—grand and impressive without, and within ridiculous. The Greeks say that the heroes became gods. The Christians will not believe in the heroes, but insist that Christ was seen after death by his friends when they saw nothing but a shadow, and they are angry with us if we in turn decline to believe them. Hundreds of Greeks are to be found to this day who maintain that they have seen, and often see, Esculapius busy about sick beds. Aristeas of Proconnesus disappeared mysteriously again and again, and started up in all quarters of the world. Abaris travelled on an arrow. Hermotimus of Clazomenæ could leave his body and return to it. Cleomedes was locked into a box, and when the box was opened he was gone. Men once living and now

[1] A very remarkable confession, considering who made it—so remarkable that it must be given in Celsus's own words: *μήτε τούτοις εἴη μήτ' ἐμο μήτ' ἄλλῳ τινὶ ἀνθρώπων ἀπόθεσθαι τὸ περὶ τοῦ κολασθήσεσθαι τοὺς ἀδίκους κα γερῶν ἀξιωθήσεσθαι τοὺς δικαίους δόγμα.* (Lib. iii. c. 16.)

deified have their temples everywhere. There are the Emperor Adrian's lovers. Antinous works miracles daily at Antinopolis. These we are to call fables; yet what we are told of Jesus we are expected to believe. Those only can believe it who have determined that it shall be regarded as true, and forbid inquiry and investigation. The Christian teachers have no power over men of education, over men of knowledge and learning. They do not address themselves to intelligence, they call human wisdom folly. The qualifications for conversion are ignorance and childish timidity. They are like the orators who gather crowds about them in the market-places; but you see no sensible person there; you see only boys and slaves and the common materials of a city mob. Weavers or cobblers will make their way into private houses; so long as the heads of the family are present, they say nothing; when they have the field to themselves, they catch hold of the children and women, and then produce their marvels. Fathers and tutors are not listened to. Fathers and tutors, they say, are mad or blind, unable to understand or do any good thing, given over to vain imaginations. The weavers and cobblers only are wise, they only have the secret of life, they only can show the way to peace and happiness. If father

and tutor come back and find them there, the more timid cease their instructions. Those who are bolder advise the children to defy their parents. They whisper that till they are alone they can teach them no more. They slink away with them into the women's apartment, or bid them come and learn the ways of perfection in their own workshops.

I speak bitterly about this, says Celsus, because I feel bitterly. When we are invited to the Mysteries, the masters use another tone. They say, 'Come to us, ye who are of clean hands and pure speech, ye who are unstained by crime, ye who have a good conscience towards God, ye who have done justly and lived uprightly.' The Christians say, 'Come to us, ye who are sinners, ye who are fools or children, ye who are miserable, and ye shall enter into the kingdom of heaven.' The rogue, the thief, the burglar, the poisoner, the spoiler of temples and tombs, these are their proselytes. Christ, they say, was sent to save sinners; was he not sent to help those who have kept themselves free from sin? They pretend that God will save the unjust man if he repents and humbles himself. The just man, who has held steady from the cradle in the ways of virtue, He will not look upon. We are to confess ourselves to be sinners, and to pray and sob for pardon. The

magistrate judges by the truth, he does not listen to tears and lamentations. Can God require such attitudes? Are we to think of God as a being who can be softened by appeals to his pity? Why are sinners to have the preference with Him? When persons with a proclivity to evil have formed evil habits, they are notoriously past cure; neither punishment nor tenderness will mend them. Surely those who are doing the best for themselves are those who best deserve help from above. It is pretended that well-conducted people are led astray by self-conceit, and will not listen to reproof. But the Christians do not address the well-conducted. They address the ignorance of the multitude; they are like the drunkards who accuse the sober of being drunk, or the half-blind who tell those with eyes that they cannot see. They are leading astray miserable men after visionary hopes, and turning them from the knowledge of all that is really good.

You say, Celsus goes on as if personally addressing the converts, that God must come down to earth to judge mankind. The Jews say, that He will come. The Christians, that He has come already. But why should God come down? To learn what mankind are doing? He already knows all things. Was it to set right what

was amiss? The everlasting order of the universe does not need to be set right. No link of it is broken or can be broken. Or perhaps you think that He was without his due honour; that He desired to learn who there were that believed in Him; that He would have us know Him for our salvation, that those who would turn to Him might repent and be saved, and those who rejected Him might be convicted of an evil heart. Do you suppose that for all these ages God had left man alone, and only now at last has remembered and visited him? You tell us nothing of God with any savour of truth in it. You terrify fools by pictures of the horrors which await the impenitent, pictures like the spectres and phantasms which we are shown in the Mysteries.

You have gathered a doctrine out of the Greek legends which you have not understood about cataclysms and conflagrations. The Greeks discovered that elemental catastrophes might be looked for in recurring cycles. The last deluge was Deucalion's: now you think that it is the turn of fire, and that God will come upon the earth as a consuming flame. God, my friends, is all-perfect and all-blessed. If He leaves his present state, and comes down as a man among men, He must pass from blessedness to un-

blessedness, from perfection to imperfection, from good to bad, and no such change is possible with Him. Change is the condition of mortality. The immortal remains the same for ever. He cannot change without ceasing to be Himself. He cannot seem to change while He remains unchanged, for then He is a deceiver. You Jews say that when the world is full of vice and violence, God must send his angels and destroy it as He did in the first Deluge. You Christians say, that the Son of God was sent on account of the Jews' sins: that the Jews crucified Him, and incurred heavier wrath than before. You are like so many ants creeping out of their anthill, or frogs sitting round a pond, or a congregation of worms on a mud-heap, discussing among themselves which have sinned, and all claiming to have had the secrets of God revealed to them. For us, they say, He has left the circuit of the sky. Our interests only He considers, forgetting all other created things: to us He sends messenger after messenger, and thinks only how to attach us to Himself: we are God's children, and are made in his likeness: for us earth, water, air, and stars were created, to be our ministers: but some of us have sinned, and now God must come, or send his Son, to burn up the offenders, and give the rest

of us frogs eternal life. Such language would be less monstrous from the frogs than from those who now use it. What are the Jews that they claim so lofty privileges? They were a colony of revolted Egyptian slaves who settled in a corner of Palestine. In their account of themselves they pretend that at the beginning God made a man with his hands, and breathed life into him. He then put him to sleep, took out one of his ribs, and of the rib made a woman. Having thus created these two, He gave them certain orders, which the serpent tempted them to disobey, and thus crossed God's purpose and got the better of Him. God having thus failed to make his creatures loyal to Himself, after a time proposed to destroy them. There was a Deluge, and a marvellous ark, in which all kinds of living things were enclosed, with a dove and a raven to act as messengers.[1] The history of the Patriarchs follows—children singularly born; brothers quarrelling; mothers plotting; a youth cheating his father-in-law; a story of Lot and his daughters worse than the banquet of Thyestes. One of the lads goes to

[1] The difficulty of conceiving that such a multitude of creatures could have been preserved in a vessel of the dimensions usually assigned to the Ark, was a very old one. Origen gets over it by saying that the figures were wrongly given. The Ark, he says, was 90,000 cubits long, and 2,500 cubits wide.

Egypt, where he interprets a dream, and becomes ruler of the country. His family join him and settle there. The Jews and Christians explain these legends into allegory, but it is all illusion together. God makes nothing which is liable to death. The soul of man is God's work. The body of man is not his work. The human body differs nothing from the body of a bat or a worm. It is made of the same materials. It comes to the same end; all material things are mortal, and subject to decay. The evil which men speak of is a necessary condition of the universe. It is not in God; it is in matter; its energy lies in corruption; and life and death succeed each other with an unchanging law of uniform succession. The world was not made for man. Each organized creature is born and perishes for the sake of the whole κόσμος. That which to you seems evil may not be evil in itself. To some other being, or to the universe, it may possibly be good. Man refers all things to himself and his own interests; but the rain from heaven was no more sent for him than it was sent for the trees and herbs. The trees and herbs are of as much benefit to the animals as to man. The animals might even with better reason regard themselves as the special objects of

God's care. Man seeks his food with pain and toil. The animals neither sow nor plough; the earth supplies them freely with all that they need. Euripides may say:

> The day and night are ministers of man.

Why more of man than of ants and gnats, to whom night brings sleep, and day the return of energy? Are we lords of the animals because we capture and devour them? Do not they equally chase and devour us? And we must use nets and weapons and hounds and huntsmen, while nature has given weapons to them sufficient with no such assistance. So far as nature goes it might be rather said that God had subjected man to beasts. Will a higher place be claimed for man because he lives in cities and rules himself by laws? So do ants and bees. They too have their chiefs, their wars, their victories, their captured enemies; they have their towns and suburbs, their division of labour, their punishment for drones: they have cemeteries for their dead: they converse and reason when they meet on the road. To one looking down from heaven no such mighty difference would appear between the doings of men and the doings of ants. The universe was no more made for man than for the

lion, the eagle, or the dolphin. One created being is not better in itself than another. All are but parts of one great and perfect whole, and this whole is the constant care of the providence of God. He does not forget it and turn to it at intervals when it has become corrupt. He is not angry with it nor threatens to destroy it on man's account any more than on account of apes and flies. Each thing in its place fulfils its allotted work.

No God or Son of God has ever come down to this earth or will come. The Jews profess to venerate the heavens and the inhabitants of the heavens; but the grandest, the most sublime, of the wonders of those high regions they will not venerate. They adore the phantasms of the dark, the obscure visions of their sleep; but for those bright and shining harbingers of good, those ministers by whom the winter rains and the summer warmth, the clouds and the lightnings and the thunders, the fruits of the earth and all living things are generated and preserved, those beings in whom God reveals his presence to us, those fair celestial heralds, those angels which are angels indeed, for them they care not, they heed them not. They dream of a God who will burn all created things to cinders, and will raise up them to life again in their fleshly bodies.

It is not to gratify such appetites of disordered minds that God presides in this universe. He rules in justice and uprightness. To the soul He may grant immortality. The flesh is but a perishing excrement which He neither will save nor, though you say that with Him nothing is impossible, is able to save, for He is Himself the reason of all things, and He cannot contradict his own nature.

The Jews as a separate nation have their own institutions and their own religion, and the Government does not interfere with them. Different peoples have each their special modes of thought and action, and it is good to preserve a community in the form in which it has grown. It may be too that the earth from the beginning has been partitioned into spiritual prefectures, each under a viceroy of its own, and that each province prospers best when left to its own ruler. National laws and customs are of infinite variety, and each nation prefers its own. If in this spirit the Jews are tenacious of their traditions, they are not to be blamed; but if they pretend to the possession of special secrets of knowledge, and refuse, as unclean, a communion with the rest of mankind, they must be taught that their own dogmas are not peculiar to them. They worship the God of heaven; the

Persians sacrifice on the hill-tops to *Dis*, by whom they mean the circle of the sky; and it matters little whether we name this Being *Dis* or 'the Most High,' or 'Zeus,' or 'Adonai,' or 'Sabaoth,' or 'Ammon,' or with the Scythians 'Papa.' The Egyptians and the Colchi were circumcised before the Jews; the Egyptians do not eat swine's flesh, nor the flesh of many animals beside; the Pythagoreans touch none. As to outward signs that God has any special care for the Jews, what has become of them? Not knowing the truth and enchanted by vain illusions, they have been swept away out of their country and bear the penalty of their arrogance.

Allow that the Christians' master may have been some angel: was he the first or the only angel that has come into the world? The Christians themselves tell of many more who, they say, rebelled and are confined in chains in the hollow of the earth, and they pretend that the hot springs are their tears. Some of them imagine that the Demiurgus, or Creator, was not the Father of Christ, and that Christ came to bring men from the Demiurgus to his Father. There are the Simonians among them who worship Helen or her master Helenus. Others derive themselves from Marcellina, others from

Salome, others from Mariamne, or from Martha. And there are, again, the Marcionites. Some of these sects prostrate themselves in darkness before imagined demons with rites more abominable than the orgies in the College of Antinous; they curse each other with horrid imprecations, and will yield no point for concord; yet, amidst their mutual reproaches, they all sing to the one note, 'The world is crucified to me, and I to the world;' 'If you will be saved, believe, or else depart from us.' Who is to decide among them? Are those who would be saved to throw dice to learn to whom to attach themselves? Again, there are the Ophiatæ, or serpent worshippers—a tree of knowledge, with the serpent for the good spirit, and with the Demiurgus for the evil spirit. There are the prophetic oracles, circles within circles, water flowing from the Church on earth, virtues distilled from the Prunic Virgin,[1] the soul living, the sky slain that it might live again, the earth stabbed with an altar knife, human beings sacrificed and restored, death ceasing out of the universe when sin shall die, the narrow road, the gates flying open of their own accord, everywhere the tree of life, and the resurrection

[1] The celestial mother of the Valentinians.

of the flesh from off the tree—I suppose because their master was crucified, and was himself a worker in wood. Had he been thrown from a cliff, or into a pit, or been hanged; had he been a shoemaker, or a mason, or a smith, we should have had the rock of life, the gulf of resurrection, the rope of immortality, or the holy leather, or the blessed stone, or the steel of charity. What nurse would not be ashamed to tell such fables to a child?

Then there are those who practise incantation and exorcism with diagrams and mystic numbers. I have seen books with the names of spirits and formulas for spells in the hands of some of their priests. An Egyptian once told me that magic had power on fools and sensualists, but could touch no one who was sound in mind and body. The Christians dream of some antagonist to God—a devil, whom they call Satanas, who thwarted God when He wished to benefit mankind. The Son of God suffered death from Satanas, but they tell us that we are to defy him, and to bear the worst that he can do: Satanas will come again and work miracles, and pretend to be God, but we are not to believe him. The Greeks tell of a war among the gods; army against army, one led by Saturn and one by Ophiucus; of challenges and battles; the vanquished

falling into the ocean, the victors reigning in heaven. In the Mysteries we have the rebellion of the Titans, and the fables of Typhon, and Horus, and Osiris. The story of the devil plotting against man is stranger than either of these. The Son of God is injured by the devil, and charges us when we are afflicted to bear it patiently. Why not punish the devil, instead of threatening poor wretches whom he deceives?

Christ must needs suffer, you say, because it was so foretold. The oracles under whose guidance so many colonies have been founded were nothing, but every word spoken or not spoken in Judæa must be infallible. Prophets and diviners are to be found at the present day scattered everywhere. They are to be met with in temples, and camps, and cities, with crowds gathered about them. 'I am God,' they say, 'or the son of God, or the Holy Spirit, and I have come because the world is to perish, and you, oh men, are like to perish, too, in your iniquities; but I will save you; hereafter you will see me coming in the power of heaven; blessed are those who believe in me now; the rest I will burn with everlasting fire; repentance will then be in vain; only those who now listen shall escape.' Then they utter some unintelligible nonsense from which

any rogue or blockhead can extract whatever meaning pleases him. I have myself spoken with some of these persons, who, when cross-questioned, have confessed that they were impostors. If prophets like these were to foretell that God was to fall sick and die, must God fall sick and die because they say so? What is incredible and unworthy may not be believed, though all mankind go mad and prophesy it. The Jewish prophets, inspired by God, you say, foretold that Christ would come to do this and that, and the prophets could not err. God through Moses promised the Israelites temporal prosperity and earthly dominion; He bade them destroy their enemies, sparing neither old nor young, and threatened them with destruction themselves unless they obeyed Him. The Son of God condemned riches, condemned ambition; men were to care no more for food or raiment than the ravens or the lilies; they were to offer the cheek to be smitten. It seems that either Moses was wrong or Christ was wrong; or are we to suppose that God changed his own mind?

You dream, perhaps, of another and better world, another existence, as in some Elysian fields, where all riddles will be solved and all evil be put away. You say unless God can be seen in the form of a

man, how are we to know Him? How can anything be known, except by the senses? You might see Him, if that was all, in the Greek temples. But your words are the words of flesh, not of reasonable men. Then only can you see God when you close the eyes of the body and open the eyes of the intellect, and if you need a guide upon the road, avoid the quacks and conjurers who promise to show you ghosts. Put away your vain illusions, your marvellous formulas, your lion and your Amphibius, your God-Ass and your celestial door-keepers,[1] in whose names, poor wretches, you allow yourselves to be persecuted and impaled. Plato says that the Architect and Father of the Universe is not easily found, and when found cannot be made known to common minds. Go learn of Plato how truth is sought for by those who are inspired indeed. Hard and narrow is the way that leads to light, and few can find it; but through the efforts of the wise we are not left wholly without some glimpse, without some conception, of that awful and eternal being. Lost in the flesh as you are, and without pure vision, I know not if you can follow me. That which is intelligible is perceived by the mind. That which

[1] An allusion to some of the Gnostic heresies.

is visible is perceived by the eye. The spirit apprehends the things of the spirit, the eye apprehends the things of the eye; and as the sun in this visible universe is not the eye and is not sight, but is the power which enables the eye to see and enables all sensible things which are the object of vision to be seen, so God is not intellect, and is not spirit, and is not knowledge, but through Him the spirit perceives, the intellect knows; in Him all truth and all objects of knowledge have their being; and He Himself, by some ineffable agency, is seen above them all. I speak as to men of understanding. It will be well if you can follow me. The spirit you speak of which you pretend has come down to you from God to teach his mysteries, is the same spirit which has made these truths known to us. If you cannot comprehend, I bid you be silent. Cover up your ignorance. Call not those blind whose eyes are open, nor those lame who run; and live as you will in your body, which is the dead part of you. If you must needs have some new doctrine, adopt some illustrious name, better suited to the dignity of a divine nature. If Hercules and Esculapius do not please you, there was Orpheus. He too died by violence. If Orpheus has been taken by others, there was Anaxarchus, who was beaten to death and

mocked at his executioners. 'Pound on,' he said, 'you can pound the sheath of Anaxarchus, himself you cannot pound.' The men of science, you may tell me, have appropriated Anaxarchus. Well, then, take Epictetus, who, when his master was wrenching his leg upon the rack, smiled, and said he would break it, and, when he did break it, said, 'I told you so.' Even the Sibyl, whose poems you interpolate with your own fables, you might have called a daughter of God with a sort of reason. Your own legendary heroes would have been more presentable than the one whom you have chosen: your Jonah who was in the whale's belly, or your Daniel in the lions' den.

You boast that you have no temples, no altars, no images. The absence of such things is not peculiar to you. The nomad Scythians and the Africans have none. The Persians have none. The Persians say the gods are not like men, and they will not represent them as men. Heraclitus says that prayer to an image is like prayer to a house wall. But you, in condemning images, are inconsistent with yourselves, for you say that man was made in the image of God. The images in the temples you pretend are images of genii. If this be so, and if there be genii, why should not they be

adored? Is not everything directed by God? Is not God's providence over all? Angels, genii, heroes, have they not each their own law prescribed by God? are they not ministering spirits set over their several provinces according to their degree? and why, if we adore God, should we not adore those who bear rule under Him?

No man, you say, can serve many masters. This is the language of sedition—of men who would divide themselves from the society of their fellows, and would carry God along with them. A slave cannot serve a second master without wronging the first to whom he belongs. But God can suffer no wrong. God can lose nothing. The inferior spirits are not his rivals, that He can resent the respect which we pay to them. In them we worship only some attribute of Him from whom they hold authority, and in saying that one only is Lord you disobey and rebel against Him. Nor do you practise your own profession. You have a second Lord yourselves, a man who lived and died a few years ago; you pretend still that in God's Son you still worship but one God; but this is a subtle contrivance that you may give the greater glory to this Son. You say that in your 'Dialogus Cœlestis,' 'If the Son of Man is stronger than God and Lord of God, who else

can be Lord of Him who is above God?'[1] You have a God above the heavens—Father of the son of man, whom you have chosen to worship; and to this son of man you give the glory of God by pretending that he is stronger than God. You have no outward services, because you prefer to be connected by a secret bond among yourselves. The true God is the common Father of us all. From us He needs nothing. He is good, and in Him is no jealousy or malice. What hurt can His most devoted servants fear from taking part in the public festivals? If the images presented there be idols, they are without power to injure. If they are spirits, they are spirits sent from God, and deserve the honour and service assigned to them by the laws. Your customs require you to abstain from the flesh of some of the animals which are offered in sacrifice. Be it so. Abstain if you will from the flesh of all animals. Pythagoras did the same. But if, as you pretend, you will not be partakers with genii, are the genii only present when the victims are slain? The corn and herbs which you eat, the wine you drink, the water and the very air you breathe, are they not all created by the spirits that are set over them? Either you must

[1] The 'Dialogus Cœlestis' was perhaps a Marcionite book. Origen knew nothing of it, and declined to be responsible for it.

not live in this world at all, or you must offer your thanksgivings and prayers to the beings from whom you receive all that you have. These supermundane and ethereal officials may be dangerous if they are neglected or insulted. You are only in danger from them, you say, if you call them by their barbarous names. You are safe if you keep to Latin and Greek equivalents. You may curse a Zeus or Apollo and strike him in the face, and he takes no notice. Alas, my good people, we, too, can outlaw your spirit by sea and land; we can take you who are his images and chain you and kill you. And your Son of God, or whatever you please to call him, is no less indifferent. We do not learn that those who put him to death suffered anything extraordinary. What has befallen since his end to persuade us that your son of man was Son of God? He was sent into the world as God's ambassador. He was killed, his message perished with him; and, after all these generations, he still sleeps. He suffered, you say, with his own consent. May not those whom you revile suffer also with their consent? It is well to compare like with like. Is there no evidence for the presence of God's Spirit in the established religion? Need I speak of the oracles? the prophecies announced from the shrines?

the revelations in the auguries? the visions of divine beings actually seen? All the world is full of these things. How many cities have been founded at the bidding of an oracle? How many rescued from plague and famine? How many have perished miserably when the oracle's commands were neglected? Princes have flourished or fallen. Childless parents have obtained their wishes. The sick and maimed have recovered health and strength. Blasphemers have gone mad confessing their crimes. Others have killed themselves, or fallen into mortal illness; some have been slain on the spot by an awful sentence out of the shrine.

You tell of the eternal torments which await the wicked. You say no more than the interpreters of the Mysteries. But the penalties which you pronounce against them, the chiefs of the Mysteries pronounce against you. Why should you be more right than they? They and you are equally confident in your message; and they as well as you have their miracles and prophecies. For your message in itself (I do not speak to such of you as are troubled about a bodily resurrection; with them it is vain to reason), to those among you who believe that the soul or intellect is immortal (intellectual spirit, holy or

blessed spirit, living spirit, effluence from incorporeal nature celestial and imperishable, name it as you please), to those who believe that the wicked will suffer everlastingly, and that the righteous will enjoy eternal happiness in the presence of God, I say that they believe truly and well. Let them hold to this doctrine. May it never be abandoned either by them or any man! Perhaps for all human beings some penal purgatory is necessary to purify the soul from the passions and pollutions by which it has been stained in its connection with the body. Mortals, Empedocles tells us, must wander apart from bliss in countless forms for 30,000 years, and are committed to the keepers of the prison-house. One, however, of two things: either you must recognize the usages of the commonwealth and respect its ministers, or the commonwealth cannot bear your presence. You must go from us and leave no seed behind you, that the trace of you may be blotted off the earth. If you choose to marry and rear children, and eat the fruit of the ground and share in the common interests of life, you must submit to the conditions, although they may not be wholly to your taste. All of us have to bear with things which we could wish otherwise. It is a law of nature, and there is no remedy. You must pay honour to those

who are set over you. You must discharge the duties of this life until you are released from the bonds of it. You cannot have the benefits of society and refuse to share its obligations. In some places the religious customs may be extravagant and superstitious, and wise men use their judgment as to the credit which they attach to them. But if the Romans were to listen to you, to abolish all their laws and customs, and to worship only your Most High, or what you please to call Him, you will not pretend that He will come and fight for them and defend them from their enemies. According to you, He promised the Jews more than this, yet He has done little either for them or for yourselves. The Jews were to have ruled the world, and they have not a yard of ground to call their own. You are only safe when you keep concealed. If you are found you are executed. God must never be forgotten either by day or night, either in public or private, either in speech or action. Whatever we do or leave undone, we should have God ever before our minds, but we must obey also the princes and rulers of this world, the powers, whatever they be, which have authority here. I do not say that obedience is without limit. If a servant of God be commanded to do some wrong act or speak an irreverent word, he is bound to

disobey. He must bear all torture and all death sooner than say or do what God forbids: but if the order be to salute the Sun or sing a hymn to Athene, he does but glorify God the more when he praises God's ministers; nor is it unlawful to swear by the emperor, for to the emperor the world is given in charge, and under him you hold all that you have.

A monarch is enthroned upon earth to whom God has committed the sceptre. Refuse to acknowledge him, refuse to serve under him in the state or the army, and he has no choice but to punish you, because if all were to act as you do he would be left alone and unsupported; the empire would be overrun by the barbarians, and all sound knowledge would be destroyed, your own superstition along with it. You have no fear, you say; you can face the prospect; you are content to see ruler after ruler perish if only he will listen to you. If the rulers have any prudence they will first make an end with you. Your notion that all the world can be brought to one mind in religion, Asiatic, European, African, Greek, and Barbarian, is the wildest of dreams. It cannot be. The very thought reveals your ignorance. Your duty is to stand by your sovereign, in the field, in the council-chamber, wherever he requires your service. Do justly in your place as citizens, and

make yourselves worthy members of the commonwealth.[1]

Such is the general bearing of this memorable treatise. There must be large gaps in many parts where the connection is broken. The conclusion is abrupt. It was, perhaps, a further development of the political aspect of the question, which Origen thought it unnecessary to quote. In places he seems to have misunderstood Celsus, in places to have unconsciously done him injustice. Throughout we do not know where we have the words of Celsus himself, and where a paraphrase of what Origen

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[1] Origen says on this very important point that Christians will only assist the Emperor with their own weapons. They will put on the armour of God. They will pray for the success of the Imperial armies when the cause is a just one. The priests of the temples were excused from shedding blood, and confined themselves to intercession. Christians abstained on the same ground to keep their hands pure. They were willing to pray for the confusion of the enemies of justice, and by defeating the evil spirits who had caused a war they would benefit the Emperor more than they could do by fighting with their hands. Serve under him as legionaries they would not, however he might try to force them.

The Fathers were divided on the matter. Tertullian wavers, but inclines to agree with Origen. Many Christians did as a fact serve in the Imperial army. The complaint of Celsus, and Origen's defiant language eighty years after, show, however, that their rule was to abstain; and we need no further explanation of the 'persecutions.' Liability to military service is a universal condition of citizenship, and no nation modern or ancient would tolerate a refusal on the plea of conscience. X

X See Tolstoi's 'Kingdom of God'

thought him to mean. Occasionally where a paragraph appears to be quoted verbally, it is unintelligible from want of context, and we are driven to Origen's rejoinders to discover what Celsus is talking about. On the whole, however, the sketch which I have given does, I believe, represent faithfully in a generalized form the argument which obstructed for a century the progress of Christianity The reply, which was long an arsenal for Christian advocates, is as beautiful as it is voluminous. It is the unfolding of the position of the Christian Church towards the surrounding world in all its simplicity, its innocence, and spiritual purity. Good men are not protected from intellectual errors. Their thoughts are occupied with higher subjects, and they attend, perhaps, less than others to merely secular learning. When he is off his own ground and attempts to answer Celsus on questions of fact, on science, on history, on statesmanship, Origen is a child contending with a giant. In the 'True Account' we find the tone and almost the language of the calm, impartial, thoughtful modern European. We find the precise attitude in which a sensible man in our own time would place himself towards any new revelation which might present itself now, pretending to be supported by miracles and interfering with political obligations. Celsus

was in advance of his age. He was on an elevation from which he could survey the past and current superstitions, and detect the origin of most of them in ignorance or credulity. Origen replies to him from the level of contemporary illusions, from which he was as little free as the least instructed of his catechumens. Celsus tells him that 'names' are not things, that names are but signs, and that different words in different languages mean the same object: that when religious Greeks speak of Zeus, and Latins of Jupiter, and Persians of Dis, and Jews of Jehovah, they all mean the common Father of mankind. Origen answers that this cannot be, because if the formula of the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, was properly pronounced, miracles were every day notoriously worked by it, while the names of the other gods had no power at all. So throughout his whole argument he assumed that the earth was full of demons; that the heathen gods were demons; that the oracles were inspired by demons; that madness and disease were possession by demons. The conjurers, whom Celsus and Lucian knew to be charlatans and impostors, were to Origen enchanters who had made a compact with Satan or had gained a power over him by magical arts. Christianity was encountering the mystery of evil on its own supernatural platform,

and putting to flight with supernatural weapons the legions of hell. Celsus had studied natural history accurately and intelligently. Origen was on the same ground as his contemporaries, and availed himself of popular errors to gain credibility for the Christian miracles. Thus he meets the objection to the virgin birth of Christ by alluding to parthenogenesis among animals, and by asserting that the vultures were an acknowledged instance of it. Celsus understood the generation of human legends, and knew their worth or worthlessness. Origen took what he found. He parallels the angel's visit to Joseph with the vision which forbade Ariston, Plato's father, to approach his wife till the first child was born. He thought the story worth producing, though he did not pledge himself to a belief that it was true. He did not see that the readiness of mankind to invent and receive such stories tended rather to suggest in all instances an analogous origin for them in human enthusiasm. To Origen the resurrection was not unexampled, because Plato says that 'Heras, the son of Arminius, had returned to life after being twelve days dead,' and 'many others were known to have risen out of their graves after they had been buried.' And when Celsus asks why Christ was seen only by his disciples after his resurrection, Origen answers that after He

had spoiled principalities and powers, his body had peculiar properties and was only visible to those who were in a proper spiritual condition.

Most persons would now admit that Celsus spoke with wise diffidence when he hesitated at the assumption that the universe and all that it contained was created solely for the sake of man. Origen is perfectly certain that God had no other object. Sun, moon, and stars, and earth and everything living upon it, were subordinated to man. In man alone, or in reference to man, the creation had its purpose and meaning. As to Adam, and the story of Paradise, it was an allegory. Adam was Adam, and he was also human nature. Allegory was always a resource when other arguments were wanting. The wholesale slaughter of the people of Canaan enjoined upon the Israelites seemed to Celsus inconsistent with the injunction to turn the cheek to the smiter. Origen boldly answers that by the Canaanites were meant the Israelites' own evil dispositions; the children of Babylon who were to be dashed against the stones, were their own wicked thoughts and inclinations, which they were ordered to tear out and fling from them. A yet bolder flight of his imagination was his escape from difficulties with the Ark. The dimensions, he said, were

wrongly given. The Ark, which was a hundred years in building, was as large as an enormous city.

But these illustrations give no true conception of Origen's argument, and on the moral and spiritual side Origen was as completely victorious as Celsus was irresistible on the intellectual. Celsus insisted that Christianity was identical in character with a thousand other superstitions. Origen was able to insist on the extraordinary difference, that neither the philosophy of the schools, nor the mysteries, the festivals, the rituals of the heathen gods availed to check the impurity of society, or to alleviate the miseries of mankind, and that vice and wretchedness disappeared in every house into which the Gospel found an entrance. This was true; and it was a truth which outweighed a million-fold the skilfullest cavils of the intellect. A new life had come into the world; it was growing like the grain of mustard-seed by its own vital force, and the earth was growing green under its shadow. Such an argument was unanswerable. No other creed could be pointed to from which any stream was flowing of moral regeneration. Celsus taunted the Christians with addressing their message to the ignorant and the miserable. 'You cannot change the nature of fallen men,' he said. Help those who are helping themselves, and

leave fools and sinners to gather as they sow.' Nature, it is true, is inexorable. Nature never pardons, and punishes mistake as harshly as she punishes crime. The law of nature is 'woe to the weak,' and human society follows nature's footsteps. Governed by a stern but wholesome instinct, society insists that each individual shall learn his duty for himself, and shall be made to feel by sharp penalties the consequences of his own transgressions. It is so, and it will be so. There is no danger that the world will ever become too merciful. But against this hard enactment there pleads in mitigation the still soft voice of humanity, which in Christianity for the first time became an effective power. The strong and successful are not always the good; the miserable are not always the wicked; and even for the wicked, pity claims to be heard in mitigation of punishment. They did not make the dispositions which they brought with them when they were born, they did not wholly make the circumstances in which those dispositions were fostered into habits. Compassion for the weak, the divinest attribute of God, now at length began to control and limit the cruelty of nature; conscience, accepting another law for itself, has been compelled by Christianity to submit to a higher rule of obligation.

Christianity abolished the gladiator shows and the fights of men with wild beasts, which turned the spectators into savage beasts themselves. More slowly, but yet surely, Christianity has forbidden the strong to seize the helpless and make them slaves, or to expose children to die lest population should become redundant. The genius of Christianity has covered Europe with hospitals for the sick; has imposed on nations the duty of contending at their own cost against plagues and famine; has created a new virtue in 'charity' which was unknown to Aristotle; and has assigned the highest place to it among human excellences. Even to the poor sinner, the abandoned profligate, given over as irredeemable by the man of the world, and left to perish, Christianity opened a window of hope; for the lost sinner there was the possibility of return; peace, happiness, redemption, recovered purity, were within his reach; the tyranny of evil might still be broken if he himself would turn from it; while the virtuous man, the man who with real success was endeavouring to live well, was not left without a message, as Celsus supposed. He was told to look into his own painted sepulchre of a heart, to compare himself at his best with what he knew that he ought to be, and to say, if he dared, that he, too, had no need of a merciful

judgment. The address of the 'Evangel,' the 'good news' to the publican and sinner, which called out the scorn of the cultivated Roman, has introduced a principle into human life which has revolutionized it from base to summit.

As it was with humanity, so it was with licentiousness. The 'resurrection of Christ' was a formula more powerful than the spell of an enchanter to cast out the devils of gluttony and bestiality. It was the eternal symbol of the death to sin and the living to righteousness. 'As Christ died in the body and rose again,' so Christians were bidden to put to death the lusts that were in their flesh, and rise again to purity. Philosophers might lecture in the schools in praise of temperance. Philosophy had become an intellectual plaything; it could not so much as expel the devil out of the philosophers themselves, who, if we can believe Lucian, were the most contemptible beings within the circuit of the Empire. Nor had Lucian himself any power of exorcism, or Celsus, or Marcus Aurelius: they had knowledge and integrity; they had large-minded statesmanship; they might lead pure lives themselves; and they had a healthy scorn for the degradation of most of their contemporaries. But they possessed no spell to cast out the vicious self-indulg-

ence of their age. They could suggest no certain fears or hopes as a motive for a better life. They could not reach the enthusiasm of emotion, which would choose a better life for its own sake, independent of motive. The conscience of the ignorant masses in the Empire was rising in indignation against the depravity of the educated; and neither able nor much caring to examine the historical details of their belief, the disciples of Christianity accepted it in its spiritual completeness, and flung themselves with all their souls into the war with evil.

Their teachers were, like themselves, animated by the same emotions, and reasoned from the same principles. They did not parade the critical proofs of this or that fact mentioned in Scripture. They took the facts as they found them, and turned them to a spiritual purpose. The early Fathers were men often of the highest intellect; but intellect takes various forms; they had not studied either human history, or the world outside them, with the eyes of critics; intellect with them had been poured into the imagination; they saw, as poets see, the spiritual truth underlying the actual, of which the actual is no more than a shell. It was not for them to oppress their hearers with laboured volumes of evidence. 'Believe,' they said; 'faith alone will save

you;' and Origen justly defended the bold position. Antecedent belief is the only basis possible for action of any kind. If we wait till we have considered all possibilities, before and behind, till we have reflected on the fallibility of our faculties, and allowed for the effect of emotion or enthusiasm in biassing our judgment, life will be gone before we have begun to live. 'Believe,' in substance said Origen himself, 'that sin is death, that to forsake sin is the resurrection to life. For the rest, the world is full of evil spirits, trying everywhere to mislead or injure you; but if there are devils there are angels; if there are enchanters there are Christ and the saints.' Christianity took up freely into itself the popular theories, the popular modes of thought, and assimilated them to its own likeness, as the growing oak takes in carbon through its leaves and converts it into fibre. It was not a new knowledge imparted authoritatively by men of science. It was the organic development of a new conviction which was taking hold of the hearts of mankind.

Have we, then, no security that the facts of Scripture history are literally and precisely true? The question is less important than it seems. The story of Newton and the apple may be a legend. Yet none the less Newton discovered and revealed

the true law of gravitation. A true religion, it cannot be too often repeated, is not a history, but a declaration of the present relation which exists at all times between God and man. So certainly the Fathers of the Church felt, or they would not have treated Scripture facts with the freedom of allegoric interpretation which we uniformly find in them. The 'Iliad' is in form a history, the play of 'Hamlet' is in form a history, and doubtless some historical facts lay at the basis of both one and the other. But the exact incidents which happened in the Troad or at Elsinore are irrelevant to the truth of the 'Iliad' or the truth of 'Hamlet.' History is true or false, as it corresponds, or does not correspond, to facts which occurred once, and never literally repeat themselves. A play or a poem is true if it contains a true picture of human nature; and it embodies not a single order of facts, or the inferences from a single order of facts, but the faithful observation of all human phenomena. Truth is thus of more kinds than one; and the truth which is of most importance to mankind is not the truth of a particular fact which occurred once in time, but the truth of the eternal facts of the constitution of the universe the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.

A CAGLIOSTRO OF THE SECOND CENTURY.

IN the Acts of the Apostles we meet with a class of persons whose features have in our own times become again familiar to us—quacks and conjurers professing to be in communication with the spiritual world, and regarded with curiosity and interest by serious men high in rank and authority. Sergius Paulus was craving for any light which could be given to him, and in default of better teaching had listened to Elymas the Sorcerer. Simon Magus, if we may credit Catholic tradition, was in favour at the Imperial Court of Rome, where he matched his power against St. Peter's, and was defeated only because God was stronger than the devil. The 'curious arts' of these people were regarded both by Christian and heathen as a real mastery of a supernatural secret; and in the hunger for information about the great mystery with which the whole

society was possessed, they rose, many of them, into positions of extraordinary influence and consequence. Asia Minor seems to have been their chief breeding ground, where Eastern magic came in contact with Greek civilization, and imposture was able to disguise itself in the phrases of philosophy.

Apollonius of Tyana was the most remarkable of these adventurers. His life, unfortunately, had been written by believers in his pretensions; and we have no knowledge of what he looked like to cool observers. The Apollonius of Philostratus is a heathen saviour, who claimed a commission from heaven to teach a pure and reformed religion, and in attestation of his authority went about healing the sick, raising dead men to life, casting out devils, and prophesying future events which came afterwards to pass. The interesting fact about Apollonius is the extensive recognition which he obtained, and the ease with which his pretensions found acceptance in the existing condition of the popular mind. Out of the legends of him little can be gathered, save the barest outline of his history. He was born four years before the Christian era in Tyana, a city of Cappadocia. His parents sent him to be educated at Tarsus in Cilicia, a place of considerable wealth and repute, and he must have been about beginning

his studies there when St. Paul as a little boy was first running about the streets. The life in Tarsus being too luxurious for Apollonius's aspirations, he became a water-drinker and a vegetarian, and betook himself as a recluse to the temple of Æsculapius at Ægæ. Æsculapius, as the god of healing, and therefore the most practically useful, had become the most popular of the heathen divinities. He alone of them was supposed to remain beneficently active, and even to appear at times in visible form in sick-rooms and by sick-beds. Apollonius's devotion to Æsculapius means that he studied medicine. On the death of his father he divided his property among the poor, and after five years of retirement he travelled as far as India in search of knowledge. He discoursed with learned Brahmins there, and came home with enlightened ideas, and with some skill in the arts of the Indian jugglers. With these two possessions he began his career as a teacher in the Roman Empire. He preached his new religion, and he worked miracles to induce people to believe in him. He was at Rome in Nero's time, when Simon Magus and St. Peter are said to have been there. Perhaps tradition has confused Apollonius with Simon Magus or Simon Magus with Apollonius. In the convulsions which followed Nero's murder,

being then an old man, he attached himself to Vespasian in Egypt. Vespasian, who was not without his superstitions, and himself had been once persuaded to work a miracle, is said to have looked kindly on him and patronized him, and Apollonius blossomed out into glory as the spiritual adviser of the Vespasian dynasty. The cruelties of Domitian estranged him. He was accused of conspiring with Nerva, and of having sacrificed a child to bribe the gods in Nerva's interest. He was even charged with having pretended to be a god himself. He was arraigned, convicted, and was about to suffer, when he vanished out of the hands of the Roman police, to reappear at Ephesus, where he soon after died.

Clearly enough, we are off the ground of history in much of this. If Apollonius died at Ephesus in Nerva's time, he was a hundred years old at least, and must have been a contemporary and neighbour of St. John, who is supposed to have been writing his Gospel in the same city about that very time.

However that may be, it is certain that after his death a temple was raised to Apollonius at the place of his birth, and Tyana became a privileged city. Similar honours were assigned elsewhere to him as an evidence of the facility and completeness with which he had gained credit for his pretended

divine commission. The truth about him is probably that he was a physician, and had obtained some real knowledge of the methods of curing diseases. In India, besides philosophy and juggling, he may have learnt to practise what is now called animal magnetism; and finding that he had a real power on the nervous system of hysterical patients, the nature of which he did not understand, he may have himself believed it to be supernatural. With these arts he succeeded in persuading his countrymen that he was 'some great one,' 'a great power of God;' and both in life and death, in an age when the traditionary religion was grown incredible, and the human race was craving for a new revelation, Apollonius of Tyana, among many others, was looked upon through a large part of the Roman Empire as an emanation of the Divine nature. Such periods are the opportunities of false prophets. Mankind when they grow enthusiastic mistake their hopes and imaginations for evidence of truth, and run like sheep after every new pretender who professes to hold the key of the mystery which they are so passionately anxious to penetrate.

Our present business, however, is not with the prophet of Tyana. Apollonius left a school of esoteric disciples behind him, with one of whom

we are fortunately able to form a closer acquaintance. Apollonius we see through a mist of illusion. Alexander of Abonotichus we are able to look at with the eyes of the cleverest man who was alive on this planet in the second century. With the help of Lucian's portrait of Alexander we can discern, perhaps, the lineaments of Apollonius himself. We can see, at any rate, what these workers of miracles really were, as well as the nature of the element in which they made their conquests, at the side of and in open rivalry with, the teachers of Christianity.

A word first about Lucian himself. At the Christian era, and immediately after it, the Asiatic provinces of the Empire were singularly productive of eminent men. The same intercourse of Eastern and Western civilization which produced the magicians were generating in all directions an active intellectual fermentation. The 'disciples' were 'called Christians first at Antioch.' It was in Asia Minor that St. Paul first established a Gentile Church. There sprang up the multitude of heresies out of conflict with which the Christian creeds shaped themselves. And by the side of those who were constructing a positive faith, were found others who were watching the phenomena round them with an anxious but severe scepticism, unable

themselves to find truth in the agitating speculations which were distracting everybody that came near them, but with a clear eye to distinguish knaves and impostors, and a resolution as honourable as St. Paul's to fight with and expose falsehood wherever they encountered it. Among these the most admirable was the satirist, artist, man of letters, the much-spoken-of and little studied Lucian, the most gifted and perhaps the purest-hearted thinker outside the Church who was produced under the Roman Empire. He was born at Samosata on the Euphrates about the year 120. He was intended for a sculptor, but his quick discursive intellect led him into a wider field, and he spent his life as a critic of the spiritual phenomena of his age. To Christianity he paid little attention. To him it appeared but as one of the many phases of belief which were showing themselves among the ignorant and uneducated. But it was harmless, and he did not quarrel with it. He belonged to the small circle of observers who looked on such things with the eyes of men of science. Cool-headed, and with an honest hatred of lies, he ridiculed the impious theology of the established pagan religion; with the same instinct he attacked the charlatans who came, like Apollonius, pretending to a Divine

commission. He was doing the Church's work when he seemed most distant from it, and was struggling against illusions peculiarly seductive to the class of minds to whom the Church particularly addressed itself. Thus to Lucian we are indebted for cross lights upon the history of times which show us how and why at that particular period Christianity was able to establish itself. His scientific contemporaries were more antagonistic to it than himself. The Celsus against whom Origen wrote his great defence was probably Lucian's intimate friend. But if Christianity was incredible and offensive to them, men like Apollonius of Tyana were infinitely more offensive. Christianity was at most a delusion. Apollonius of Tyana they hated as a quack and a scoundrel. Besides the treatise which Origen answered, Celsus wrote a book against the magicians. Lucian speaks of Apollonius in a letter to Celsus as if they were both agreed about the character of the prophet of Tyana, and had this book survived we should have perhaps found a second picture there of Apollonius, which would have made impossible the rash parallels which have been attempted in modern times. The companion picture of Alexander of Abonotichus, by Lucian himself, happily remains. When the world was

bowing down before this extraordinary rascal, Lucian traced out his history, and risked his own life in trying to explode the imposture. Though human folly proved too strong, and Alexander died, like Apollonius, with the supernatural aureole about him, Lucian, at the express desire of Celsus, placed on record a minute account of the man, lucid to the smallest detail. He describes him as a servant of the devil, in the most modern sense of the word—not of the prince of the power of the air, as a Christian Father would have described him, with evil genii at his bidding, but of the devil of lying and imposture with whom now-a-days we are so sadly familiar. He commences with an apology for touching so base a subject; he undertakes it only at his friend's request. Nor can he tell the entire story. Alexander of Abonotichus was as great in rascaldom as Alexander of Macedon in war and politics. His exploits would fill large volumes, and the most which Lucian could do was to select a few basketfuls from the dungheap and offer them as specimens. Even thus much he feels a certain shame in attempting. If the wretch had received his true deserts, he would have been torn in pieces by apes and foxes in the arena, and the very name of him would have been blotted out of

memory. Biographies, however, had been written, and had given pleasure, of distinguished highwaymen; and an account of a man who had plundered, not a small district, but the whole Roman Empire, might not be without its uses.

With these few words of contemptuous preface Lucian tells his story; and in a form still more abridged we now offer it to our readers.

Abonotichus was a small coast town on the south shore of the Black Sea, a few miles west of Sinope. At this place, at the beginning of the second century, the future prophet was brought into the world. His parents were in a humble rank of life. The boy was of unusual beauty; and having no inclination to work and a very strong inclination for pleasure, he turned his advantages to abominable account. By-and-by he was taken up by a doctor who had been one of Apollonius's disciples. The old villain had learnt his master's arts. He understood medicine, could cure stomach-aches and head-aches, set a limb or assist at a lying-in. But besides his legitimate capabilities, he had set up for a magician. He dealt in spells and love-charms; he could find treasures with a divining rod, discover lost deeds and wills, provide heirs for disputed inheritances, and, when well paid for it, he knew how to mix a poison. In

these arts the young Alexander became an apt pupil and was useful as a sort of *famulus*. He learnt Apollonius's traditionary secrets, and at the age of twenty, when his master died, he was in a condition to practise on his own account.

He was now thrown on the world to shift for himself. But his spirits were light, and his confidence in himself was boundless: as long as there were fools with money in their pockets, he could have a well-founded hope of transferring part of it to his own. A provincial town was too small a theatre of operations. He set off for Byzantium, the great mart of ancient commerce, which was thronged with merchants from all parts of the world. Like seeks like. At Byzantium, Alexander made acquaintance with a vagabond named Cocconas, a fellow who gained a living by foretelling the winners at games and races, lounging in the betting rings, and gambling with idle young gentlemen. By this means he found entrance into what was called society. Alexander was more beautiful as a man than as a boy. Cocconas introduced him to a rich Macedonian lady, who was spending the season in the city. The lady fell in love with him, and on her return to her country-seat at Pella, carried Alexander and his friend along with her. This was very well for a

time; but the situation, perhaps, had its drawbacks. Aspiring ambition is not easily satisfied; and the young heart began to sigh for a larger sphere.

In the midst of pleasure he had an eye for business. In Macedonia, and especially about Pella, there was at this time a great number of large harmless snakes. They came into the houses, where they were useful in keeping down rats and mice; they let the children play with them; they crept into beds at night, and were never interfered with. From this local peculiarity the story, perhaps, originated of the miraculous birth of Alexander the Great. It occurred to the two adventurers that something might be made of one of these serpents. They bought a very handsome specimen, and soon after they left Pella, taking it with them.

For a while they lounged about together, carrying on Cocconas's old trade, and expanding it into fortune-telling. Fools, they observed, were always craving to know the future, and would listen to any one who pretended to see into it. In this way they made much money, and they found the art so easy that their views went higher. They proposed to set up an oracular shrine of their own, which would take the place of Delphi and Delos. The pythonesses on the old-established tripods were growing silent. Apollo,

it seemed, was tired of attending them, and inquirers were often sent away unsatisfied. There was clearly a want in the world, and Alexander and his friend thought they saw their way towards supplying it.

The loss of oracles was not the whole of the misfortune. The world was beginning to feel that it had even lost God. The Greek mythology had grown incredible. The Epicureans were saying that there was no such thing as Providence, and never had been. The majority of people were still of a different opinion; but they were uneasy, and were feeling very generally indeed that if gods there were, they ought to make their existence better known. Here was an opportunity, not only of making a fortune, but of vindicating the great principles of religion and becoming benefactors of humanity.

They decided to try. Sleight of hand and cunning might succeed when philosophy had failed. Was it said there were no gods? They would produce a god, a real visible god, that men could feel and handle, that would itself speak and give out oracles, and so silence for ever the wicked unbelievers. So far they saw their way. The next question was, the place where the god was to appear. Cocconas was for Chalcedon, on the Asiatic side of the Bosphorus. It was a busy town, almost as full of

merchants as Byzantium, the population all engaged with speculation, and money in any quantity to be made there. This was good as far as it went. But Chalcedon was too much in the light. The pagan gods, as the shrewder Alexander knew, were not fond of commercial cities. Christianity might thrive there; but caves, mountains, and woods, remote islands, retired provincial villages, suited better with Apollo and Æsculapius. Traders' wits were sharpened with business, and they might be unpleasantly curious. The simple inhabitants of the interior, Phrygians and Bithynians, Galatians and Cappadocians, would be an easier prey where a reputation had first to be created—and success depended upon a favourable beginning. At his own Abonotichus, he told Cocconas that a man had only to appear with a fife and drum before him, and clashing a pair of cymbals, and the whole population would be on their knees before him.

The better judgment of Alexander carried the day. Abonotichus itself was decided on as the theatre of operations. Cocconas, however, was allowed to introduce Chalcedon into the first act of the drama. Æsculapius, the best believed in of the surviving divinities, was the god who was to be incarnated. Joe Smith must have read Lucian's

story, and have taken a hint from it. In the temple of Apollo at Chalcedon the bold adventurers buried some brass plates, bearing an inscription that Apollo and Æsculapius were about to visit Pontus, and that Æsculapius would appear at Abonotichus in a bodily form. The plates were conveniently discovered, and became the talk of the bazaars. Merchants going and coming spread the story. Asia Minor was excited, as well it might be. At the favoured Abonotichus the delighted people resolved to build a temple to receive the god at his coming and they set to work at once, clearing the ground for the foundations.

The train being thus well laid, Alexander had no further need of a companion. Cocconas was a vulgar type of a rogue, unfit for the decorous hypocrisies which were now to be acted. He was left behind on some pretext at Chalcedon, where he died, it was said, from a snake-bite, and so drops out of sight. The supreme performer returned, with the field to himself, to his native town. Lucian describes him as he then appeared; tall, majestic, extremely handsome, hair long and flowing, complexion fair, a moderate beard, partly his own and partly false, but the imitation excellent, eyes large and lustrous, and a voice sweet and limpid. As to

his character, says Lucian, 'God grant that I may never meet with such another. His cunning was wonderful, his dexterity matchless. His eagerness for knowledge, his capacity for learning, and power of memory, were equally extraordinary.'

The simple citizens of Abonotichus, on the watch already for the coming of a god among them, had no chance against so capable a villain. They had not seen him since the wonderful days of his boyhood, when he had been known as the *famulus* of an old wizard. He now presented himself among them, his locks wildly streaming, in a purple tunic with a white cloak thrown over it. In his hand he bore a falchion like that with which Perseus had slain the Gorgon. He chanted a doggrel of Alexandrian metaphysics, with monads and triads, pentads and decads, playing in anagrams upon his own name. He had learnt from an oracle, he said, that Perseus was his mother's ancestor, and that a wonderful destiny had been foretold for him. He rolled his beautiful soft eyes. With the help of soap-wort he foamed at the mouth as if possessed. The poor people had known his mother, and had no conception of her illustrious lineage. But there was no disputing with an oracle. What an oracle said must be true. He was received with an ovation, all the

town bowing down before him, and he then prepared for his next step.

The snake throughout the East was the symbol of knowledge and immortality. The serpent with his tail in his mouth represented the circle of eternity. The serpent in annually shedding its skin was supposed to renew its life for ever. A sect even of Gnostic Christians were serpent worshippers From the time of the brazen serpent in the wilderness, it was the special emblem of the art of healing; and if the divine physician ever appeared on earth in visible shape, a snake's was the form which he might be expected to assume.

The snake which had been bought at Pella was now to be applied to its purpose. The monster, for it was of enormous size, had accompanied Alexander through his subsequent adventures. It had become so tame that it would coil about his body, and remain in any position which he desired. He had made a human face out of linen for it, which he had painted with extreme ingenuity. The mouth would open and shut by an arrangement of horsehair. The black forked tongue shot in and out, and the creature had grown accustomed to its mask and wore it without objection.

A full-grown divinity being thus ready at hand,

the intending prophet next furnished himself with the egg of a goose, opened it, cleared out the contents, and placed inside a small embryo snake just born. This done, he filled the cracks and smoothed them over with wax and white lead. Æsculapius's temple was meanwhile making progress. The foundations had been dug, and there were pits and holes, which a recent rain had filled with water. In one of these muddy pools Alexander concealed his egg, as he had done the plates at Chalcedon, and the next morning he rushed into the market-place in a state of frenzy, almost naked, a girdle of gold tissue about his waist, hair streaming, eyes flashing, mouth foaming, and the Perseus falchion wheeling about his head. The crowd collected at the sight of him, frantic as himself. He sprang upon some mound or bench. 'Blessed,' he cried, 'be this town of Abonotichus, and blessed be they that dwell in it. This day the prophecy is fulfilled, and God is coming to take his place among us.'

The entire population was out, old and young, men and women, quivering with hope and emotion. Alexander made an oration in an unknown tongue; some said it was Hebrew, some Phœnician, all agreed that it was inspired. The only words articulately

heard were the names of Apollo and Æsculapius. When he had done he set up the familiar Psalm of the Sun God, and moved, with the crowd singing in chorus behind him, to the site of the temple. He stepped into the water, offered a prayer to Æsculapius, and then asking for a bowl he scooped his egg out of the mud.

'Æsculapius is here,' he said, holding it for a moment in the hollow of his hand. And then, with every eye fixed on him in the intensity of expectation, he broke it. The tiny creature twisted about his fingers. 'It moves, it moves!' the people cried in ecstasy. Not a question was asked. To doubt would have been impious. They shouted. They blessed the gods. They blessed themselves for the glory which they had witnessed. Health, wealth, all pleasant things which the gods could give, they saw raining on the happy Abonotichus. Alexander swept back to his house bearing the divinity in his bosom, the awe-struck people following. For a few days there was a pause, while the tale of what had happened spread along the shores of the Black Sea. Then on foot, on mules, in carts, in boats, multitudes flocked in from all directions to the birthplace of Æsculapius. The roads were choked with them; the town overflowed with them. 'They had the

forms of men,' as Lucian says, 'but they were as sheep in all besides, heads and hearts empty alike.' Alexander was ready for their reception. He had erected a booth or tabernacle with a door at each end and a railed passage leading from one door to the other. Behind the rail on a couch in a subdued light, the prophet sat visible to every one, the snake from Pella wreathed about his neck, the coils glittering amidst the folds of his dress, the tail playing on the ground. The head was concealed; but occasionally the prophet raised his arm, and then appeared the awful face, the mouth moving, the tongue darting in and out. There it was, the veritable traditionary serpent with the human countenance which appears in the mediæval pictures of the Temptation and the Fall.

The prophet told the spectators that into this mysterious being the embryo that was found in the egg had developed in a few days. The place was dark; the crowd which was pressing to be admitted was enormous, The stream of worshippers passed quickly from door to door. They could but look and give place to others. But a single glance was enough for minds disposed to believe. The rapidity of the creature's growth, so far from exciting suspicion, was only a fresh evidence of its miraculous

nature. The first exhibition was so successful that others followed. The first visitors had been chiefly the poor; but as the fame of the appearance spread, the higher classes caught the infection. Men of fortune came with rich offerings; and so confident was Alexander in their folly, that those who gave most liberally were allowed to touch the scales and to look steadily at the moving mouth. So well the trick was done that Lucian says, 'Epicurus himself would have been taken in.' 'Nothing could save a man but a mind with the firmness of adamant, and fortified by a scientific conviction that the thing which he supposed himself to see was a physical impossibility.'

The wonder was still imperfect. The divinity was there, but as yet he had not spoken. The excitement, however, grew and spread. All Asia Minor was caught with it. The old stories were true, then. There were gods after all, and the wicked philosophers were wrong. Heavy hearts were lifted up again. From lip to lip the blessed message flew; over Galatia, over Bithynia, away across the Bosphorus, into Thrace and Macedonia. A god, a real one, had been born at Abonotichus, with a serpent's body and the face of a man. Pictures were taken of him. Images were made in brass or silver, and circulated in thousands. At

length it was announced that the lips had given an articulate sound.

'I am Glycon, the sweet one,' the creature had said, 'the third in descent from Zeus, and the light of the world.'

The temple was now finished. Proper accommodation had been provided for Æsculapius and his prophet priest; and a public announcement was made that the god, for a fit consideration, would answer any questions which might be put to him. There was a doubt at first about the tariff. Amphilochus, who had migrated from Thebes to a shrine in Cilicia, and had been prophesying there for ten centuries, charged two obols, or three pence, for each oracle; but money had fallen in value, and answers directly from a god were in themselves of higher worth. Æsculapius, or Alexander for him, demanded eight obols, or a shilling. Days and hours were fixed when inquirers could be received. They were expected to send in their names beforehand, and to write their questions on a paper or parchment, which they might seal up in any way that they pleased. Alexander received the packets from their hands, and after a day, or sometimes two days, restored them with the answers to the questions attached.

People came, of course, in thousands. The seal

being apparently unbroken, the mere fact that an answer was given of some kind predisposed them to be satisfied with it. Either a heated knife-blade had been passed under the wax, or a cast of the impression was taken in collyrium and a new seal was manufactured. The obvious explanation occurred to no one. People in search of the miraculous never like to be disappointed. Either they themselves betray their secrets, or they ask questions so foolish that it cannot be known whether the answer is true or false. Most of the inquirers came to consult Æsculapius about their health, and Alexander knew medicine enough to be able generally to read in their faces what was the matter with them. Thus they were easily satisfied, and went away as convinced as when they arrived. The names being given in beforehand, private information was easily obtained from slaves or companions. Shrewd guesses were miracles, when they were correct, and one success outweighed a hundred failures. In cases of difficulty the oracular method was always in reserve, with the ambiguities of magniloquent nonsense. The real strength of Alexander was in his professional skill, which usually was in itself all-sufficient. He had a special quack remedy of his own, which he prescribed as a panacea, a harmless plaster made out of goat's

fat. To aspiring politicians, young lovers, or heirs expectant, he replied that the fates were undecided, and that the event depended on the will of Æsculapius and the intercessions of his prophet.

Never was audacity greater or more splendidly rewarded. The gold ingots sent to Delphi were as nothing compared to the treasures which streamed into Abonotichus. Each question was separately paid for, and ten or fifteen were not enough for the curiosity of single visitors. The work soon outgrew the strength of a single man. The prophet had an army of disciples, who were munificently paid. They were employed, some as servants, some as spies, oracle manufacturers, secretaries, keepers of seals, or interpreters of the various Asiatic dialects. Each applicant received his answer in his own tongue, to his overwhelming admiration. Success brought fresh ambitions with it. Emissaries were dispersed through the Empire spreading the fame of the new prophet; instigating fools to consult the oracle, and letting Alexander know who they were and what they wanted. If a slave had run away, if a will could not be found, if a treasure had been secreted if a robbery was undiscovered, Alexander became the universal resource. The air was full of miracles. The sick were healed. The dead were raised to

life, or were reported and were believed to have been raised, which came to the same thing. To believe was a duty, to doubt was a sin. A god had come on earth to save a world which was perishing in scepticism. Simple hearts were bounding with gratitude; and no devotion could be too extreme, and no expression of it in the form of offerings too extravagant. Æsculapius might have built a throne of gold for himself out of the pious contributions of the faithful. Being a god, he was personally disinterested; 'gold and silver,' he said through the oracle, 'were nothing to him; he commanded only that his servant the prophet should receive the honours due to him.'

High favour such as had fallen upon Alexander could not be enjoyed without some drawbacks. The world believed, but an envious minority remained incredulous, and whispered that the prophet was a charlatan. The men of science persisted that miracles were against nature, and that a professing worker of miracles was necessarily a rogue. The Christians, to whom Lucian does full justice in the matter, regarded Alexander as a missionary of the devil, and abhorred both him and his works. Combinations were formed to expose him. Traps were cleverly laid for him, into which all his adroitness could not

save him from occasionally falling. But he had contrived to entangle his personal credit in the great spiritual questions which were agitating mankind, and to enlist in his interest the pious side of paganism. The schools of philosophy were divided about him. The respectable sects, Platonists, Stoics, and Pythagoreans, who believed in a spiritual system underlying the sensible, saw in the manifestation at Abonotichus a revelation in harmony with their theories. If they did not wholly believe, they looked at it as a phenomenon useful to an age which was denying the supernatural.

Alexander, quick to catch at the prevailing influences, flattered the philosophers in turn. Pythagoras was made a saint in his calendar. He spoke of Pythagoras as the greatest of the ancient sages. He claimed to represent him; at length he let it be known privately that he was Pythagoras. He gilt his thigh, and the yellow lustre was about to be seen. The wise man of Samos was again present unrecognized, like Apollo among the herdsmen of Admetus.

The philosophers of the second century, if Lucian can be believed, were not a lofty set of beings. They professed sublime doctrines, but the doctrines had little effect on their lives, and the different schools hated one another with genuine sectarian

intensity. The Pythagoreans were little better than their rivels, but their teaching was more respectable. They insisted that men had souls as well as bodies. They believed in immortality and future retribution, and they had the sympathies with them of the decent part of society. Alexander's instinct led him to them as the best friends he could have; and they in turn were ready to play into his hands in their own interests. By their mystical theories they were the natural victims of illusion. Opinions adopted out of superstition or emotion cannot be encountered by reason. They are like epidemic diseases which seize and subdue the mental constitution. They yield only when they have spent their force, and are superseded by other beliefs of an analogous kind. The spiritual world is ruled by homœopathy, and one disorder is only cured by a second and a similar one.

Thus supported, therefore, Pythagoras Alexander replied to attempts at exposure by open defiance. Pontus, he said, was full of blaspheming atheists and Christians; Æsculapius was displeased that, after he had condescended to come among his people, such wretches should be any longer tolerated; and he demanded that they should be stoned out of the province. A pious inquirer was set to ask after

the soul of Epicurus. Æsculapius answered that Epicurus was in hell, lying in filth, and in chains of lead. The Pythagoreans clapped their hands. Hell, they had always said, was the proper place for him; and in hell he was; the oracle had declared it.

It is very interesting to find two classes of men, generally supposed to be so antagonistic as the men of science and the Christians, standing alone together against the world as the opponents of a lying scoundrel. The explanation of their union was that each of them had hold of a side of real truth, while the respectable world was given over to shadows. The Epicureans understood the laws of nature and the principles of evidence. The Christians had a new ideal of human life and duty in them, which was to regenerate the whole race of mankind. It was thus fit and right that they should work together against a wretch who understood nothing but human folly and the art of playing upon it, and against the gulls and idiots who were ready to swallow any absurdity which surprised or flattered them.

The Epicureans were Alexander's most dangerous enemies; for they had friends in the higher circles of society. Amestris, between Abonotichus and the Bosphorus, was the seat of the provincial adminis-

tration. Lepidus, the Roman proprætor, was a man of sense and culture. The town took its intellectual tone from him, and was unfavourable to the prophet's pretensions. Ingenious tricks had been played upon him from that quarter, with too much success; and he had been driven to announce that for the future no inquiries sent from Amestris would be entertained. Some mockeries had followed. Alexander could not afford to let the public enthusiasm cool, and mistakes for the future must be avoided. Æsculapius had hitherto communicated with his worshippers in writing. When he uttered sounds, it was in private to the prophet. To silence doubt, the serpent was now to be heard directly speaking. A tube was fitted through which articulate noises could be made to issue from the snake's mouth with the help of a confederate behind the curtain. Select visitors only were admitted to this especially sacred performance, and a high price had to be paid for it. But the experiment was tried with perfect success; and the method was found to have its conveniences. The word-of-mouth oracles were taken down and were given afterwards to the world; but if mistakes had been made, they could be altered before publication. An accident of the kind happened shortly after, which might have been disastrous if

the original practice had been followed, but which Alexander was able to turn into a brilliant success.

Severian, a Roman general, had been sent by the emperor Verus to invade Armenia. He called at Abonotichus on his way, to learn if he was likely to succeed, and Æsculapius encouraged him with his own lips in bad Homeric verse. He had told Severian, that he would subdue the Armenians, and return in glory to Rome with the bay wreath on his temples and wearing the golden circlet of Apollo. Severian, whether he believed Æsculapius or not, went his way, lost his army, and was himself killed. The oracle was immediately reversed. The line which appeared in the published record was: 'Go not against the Armenians, where death and disaster await thee.' Thus out of 'the nettle danger' Alexander 'had plucked the flower safety.' The death of Severian was explained by his neglect or defiance of the warning. In another way, too, he showed his prudence. He made friends at the rival shrines. Monopolies, he knew, were odious and dangerous. If Æsculapius spoke through him, Apollo spoke now and then elsewhere. He would sometimes tell a patient that he had no message for him, and that he must go for advice to Claros or to the cave of the Branchidæ.

Thus he continued to baffle his detractors, and to rise from glory to glory. His fame reached the Imperial Court, and to consult Alexander became the fashion in high Roman society. Ladies of rank, men of business, intriguing generals or senators, took into their counsels the prophet of Abonotichus. Some who had perilous political schemes on hand were rash enough to commit their secrets to paper, and to send them, under the protection of their seals, for the opinion of Æsculapius. The prophet, when he discovered matter of this kind, kept the packets by him without returning them. He thus held the writers in his power, and made them feel that their lives were in his hands.

And there were others in high position, men of thought who were waiting for some kind of revelation, that sought him out from purer motives. Rutilian, a senator, in favour with the Emperor, a man of ability, who had passed his life in the public service, and still held an important office, adopted Alexander for his spiritual father. Rutilian was a Pythagorean of most devout temperament, assiduous in prayers to the Invisible Being or Beings of whose existence he was assured. When he heard that Æsculapius had come into the world, he had already a predisposition to believe, and was prevented only by public duties

from flying to learn if the news was true. He could not go to Pontus himself, but he sent friends on whom he could rely, and whose temperament resembled his own. The majestic appearance of the prophet, the inspired eyes, the rich sweet voice, awed them into immediate conviction. They were shown wonders; but they had believed before they had seen, and they returned to Rome to exaggerate what they had witnessed. Rutilian, receiving their report into his own eager imagination, brought it out of the crucible again transfigured yet more gloriously. He was a man of known piety and veracity, incapable of conscious falsehood, true and just in all his dealings. Astonished Rome could not yet wholly surrender itself. Officers of the imperial household hastened over to see with their own eyes. It had not occurred to them that they might see things which they could not explain, yet that what they saw might be no more than a trick. Men without scientific training who trust their own judgment in such matters are the natural prey of charlatans. These gentlemen came to Abonotichus. They were received with the highest honours. Alexander displayed his miracles to them, made them handsome presents, and sent them home open-mouthed to glorify Æsculapius and his prophet

in the fullest confidence that they were speaking nothing but the truth. Rutilian was triumphant. He was now either relieved from office, or he obtained leave of absence, and at last was able to throw himself in person at the apostle's feet. He was sixty years old at the time when the acquaintance began. His wife was dead, and he had one only son. The first question which he asked Alexander was about his boy's education. Alexander told him that his teachers were to be Pythagoras and Homer. The child died, and went to his tutors in Hades; and the prophet at the first step had given a convincing proof of his inspiration. Lucian, in his contempt of folly, half pardons Alexander when such a man as Rutilian was so eager to be his dupe. The new disciple, being a Pythagorean, believed in pre-existence. He asked through what personalities he had himself passed already. Alexander told him that he had been no less a person than Achilles. After Achilles he had been Menander, and when his present life was over he was to become immortal, and live thenceforward as a sunbeam. Rutilian believed it all. No absurdity was too monstrous for him; while he on his part was infinitely useful to Alexander. Few sceptics were hardy enough thenceforward to question the character of the friend of the Emperor's favourite.

Among his female adorers or connections, of whom Alexander had as many as Brigham Young, there was a girl whom he called his daughter, on the mother's side of exalted parentage. Selene, or the Moon, had seen Alexander sleeping like Endymion, had become enamoured of him, and had descended to his embraces. The young lady he declared to be the offspring of this celestial union. Rutilian being a widower was informed that Selene and Æsculapius had selected him to be her husband. He was delighted. He believed the marriage to be an adoption into heaven. Like Menelaus, he would never die, being the son-in-law of a god, and the nuptials were celebrated with august solemnity.

Abonotichus after this became a holy city, a Mecca, a place of pilgrimage. The prophet was a power in the Empire, and began to surround himself with pomp and display. Among other ceremonies he instituted a public service in the temple in imitation of the mysteries of Eleusis. That he was able to present such scenes with impunity is a most curious illustration of the mental condition of the time.

The service commenced with a procession of acolytes carrying torches, the prophet at their head, like the priests of Ceres, giving notice to the profane to keep aloof, and inviting the believers in Æsculapius

to approach and take part in the holy mystery. The profane whom he specially meant were the Christians and the atheists. The prophet spoke; the congregation answered. The prophet said, 'Away with the Christians!' The people replied, 'Away with the atheists!' Those who presented themselves for communion were examined first by Alexander to ascertain their fitness. If found unorthodox, they were excluded from the temple. The ceremonial then commenced. It consisted of a series of tableaux. The first day was given to representations of the lying-in of Latona, the birth of Apollo, the marriage of Apollo and Coronis, with the issue of it in the generation of Æsculapius. On the second day there was the incarnation of 'the sweet one,' with the Chalcedon plates, the goose egg, and the snake. Alexander himself was the hero of the third. A new revelation, it seems, had informed him of the mysterious circumstances attending his own coming into the world. His mother had been visited by Podalirius, Æsculapius's mythical son. The temple was then brilliantly illuminated. The prophet, after some preliminary gesticulations, laid himself down, as Endymion, to sleep upon the couch. Selene, the Moon, personated by the beautiful wife of an officer of the imperial

court, who was the prophet's mistress, descended upon him from the roof and covered him with kisses, the husband looking on, delighted with the honour which had fallen upon him.

In the final scene, Alexander reappeared in his priestly dress. A hymn was sung to the snake, the congregation accompanying or responding. The choir then formed into a circle and went through a mystic dance, the prophet standing in the centre.

The miraculous birth of Alexander, after being thus announced, was made into an article of faith which the disciples were bound to receive. A difficulty arose which had not been foreseen. If he was the son of a god, how could he be Pythagoras? and how came he by the golden thigh? He was equal to the occasion; he was not Pythagoras, he said, and yet he was. He had the same soul with Pythagoras; for that soul was the Spirit of God, which waned and was renewed like the moon. The Spirit descended from heaven at special times and on special persons, and again ascended when its purpose was attained. The gold thigh was perhaps explained as its accompanying symbol.

Having indentified himself with the Pythagoreans, he announced with authority the general truth of their doctrines. He insisted on an elevated

morality, and directed his disciples to abstain from sensual vices. The rules, however, had no application to himself, and behind the veil he created a Cyprian paradise. His reputation being so well established, the privilege of admission to the temple rites was eagerly sought after.

The oracle, meanwhile, was active as ever, and now and then by its mistakes produced a frightful injustice. A Paphlagonian gentleman had sent his son to be educated at Alexandria. The boy had joined an expedition up the Nile, where he fell in with some merchants on their way to the Red Sea and India. Curiosity led him to accompany them; and his household in the city, who had charge of him, after waiting for a while and finding that he did not come back, concluded that he had been drowned in the river, and returned to Paphlagonia with the news that the boy was dead. The father consulted the seer of Abonotichus. Alexander informed him that his son had been made away with by the servants. The Roman governor was appealed to. The word of Alexander, supported as he was by Rutilian, was conclusive, and the unfortunate wretches were thrown to the wild beasts. Soon after, the boy appeared, none the worse for his journey; and an indignant friend of the family went

to Abonotichus to expose the impostor before his worshippers. Unfortunately, a superstition once established is proof against commonplace evidence. Alexander only answered by telling the congregation to stone the blasphemer, who was rescued when nearly dead by the interposition of a casual traveller.

Another adventure into which he fell might have been more dangerous. The war of Marcus Aurelius with the Marcomanni was the occasion of the celebrated story in Christian mythology of the Thundering Legion. It is difficult, and even impossible, to reconcile the account of the war in the Christian legend with Lucian's description of it; but Lucian was alive at the time, and when he says that the Emperor was disastrously defeated, he is unlikely to have been mistaken. Lucian says that Marcus Aurelius, before he began the campaign, applied to Alexander. Alexander told him that if he devoted two lions to the gods and threw them into the Danube, there would be a glorious victory and a happy peace. The lions swam the river, landed on the opposite bank, and were immediately killed. The Emperor lost a battle and many thousand men. Aquileia itself nearly escaped being taken.

This catastrophe tried the faith even of Rutilian. Alexander, however, told him that the gods had

foretold a victory, but had not allowed him to know on which side the victory would be. Rutilian resisted temptation and continued to believe.

Affairs, however, had become serious, when such a man was allowed to play with the interests of the Empire. Intelligent Romans went to Abonotichus to make inquiries, and were so troublesome that Æsculapius had to interfere. When a stranger arrived the god decided whether he was to be admitted to reside in the town. A suspicious visitor was ordered to depart under penalties. At last, as a public warning against the dangerous spirit of scepticism, Alexander burnt a copy of the writings of Epicurus in the market square, and threw the ashes into the sea. Lepidus of Amestris, the Roman governor, made another effort. The prophet was on his guard against laymen; but a priest it was thought might be more fortunate. A priest was sent, but unluckily the priest was a fool and gave Alexander a new triumph. He was granted an interview with 'the sweet one,' and conversation followed which Lucian saw hung up in a temple at Tium, written in letters of gold :—

Priest. Tell me, Lord Glycon, who art thou?

Glycon. I am the young Æsculapius, the second and not the first. This is a mystery, which may not be revealed.

Priest. How long wilt thou remain with us?

Glycon. My time is a thousand years and three. Then I go to the East to the barbarians. They also must hear my word.

Priest. What will become of me after this life?

Glycon. First thou wilt be a camel, and then a prop like Alexander.

The dialogue ended with a curse on Lepidus for inquisitiveness and unbelief.

Other means failing, the adventure was next undertaken by Lucian himself. Lucian was a friend of Rutilian. He had many times remonstrated with him. He had endeavoured to prevent his marriage. He had protested against the countenance which Rutilian was lending to a lying rogue. Rutilian pitied Lucian's hardness of heart, and perhaps advised him to go to Abonotichus and examine for himself. Lucian, at any rate, went. Rutilian's friendship secured him respectful treatment. Alexander received him with extreme courtesy, and he admits that the prophet's manners and appearance surprised and struck him. But Lucian was fortified with a conviction that all pretenders to supernatural powers were enthusiasts or impostors, that miracles had never been and could not be. He tried Æsculapius with unusual

Alexander

questions. He asked him first if the prophet wore false hair. He sealed his envelope so skilfully that it could not be opened, and he received an answer in an 'unknown tongue.' He discovered next that the prophet had been sounding his valet as to Lucian's object in coming to him. The valet was faithful, and Lucian bade him tell Alexander that he was suffering from a pain in his side. He then wrote himself, on two slips of paper, 'What was the birthplace of Homer?' enclosed them in two packets, and sealed them as before. The valet informed the prophet that one referred to the pain, and that the other was to ask whether his master should return to Italy by land or sea. The replies were, first, an advice to try Alexander's plaster; secondly, an intimation that the voyage would prove dangerous. These experiments would have been enough for Lucian, but his object was rather to convince his friend than himself, and he tried again.

This time he wrote, 'When will the villanies of Alexander be exposed?' At the back of the envelope he made a note that it contained eight questions, all of which he paid for. The prophet was completely caught; he returned eight answers, the whole of them unintelligible; and with demon-

stration, as he thought, in his hands, Lucian went to his friend.

He found his labour thrown away. Belief in the marvellous does not rise from evidence and will not yield to it. There is the easy answer, that infidels are answered according to the impiety of their hearts, that the gods will not and perhaps cannot work miracles in the presence of sceptics. Nothing came of the first visit except that Lucian lost the regard of his friend, whom Alexander warned against him. But he had become interested in the matter; he determined to probe the mystery to the bottom. He went to the governor and offered, if he could have security for his life, to furnish him with proofs of the imposition which would justify the interference of the police.

The governor gave him a guard of soldiers, and thus attended he went to Abonotichus a second time. The prophet was holding his levée. Lucian presented himself, neglecting to make an obeisance, to the general scandal. The prophet took no notice, but gave him his hand to kiss, and Lucian bit it to the bone. The believers shrieked and Lucian would have been strangled but for his guard. Alexander, however, to his surprise and real admiration, bore the pain manfully. He told his friends that he

and his god had tamed ruder spirits than Lucian's; he bade them all retire, and leave him and his visitor together.

When they were alone, he asked Lucian quietly why a person whose acquaintance he had valued, was determined to be his enemy. Calmness is always agreeable. Lucian never doubted for a moment Alexander's real character, but the prophet interested him in spite of himself. That he might study him at leisure, he accepted his overtures, and even entered into some kind of intimacy with him. He stayed for some days at Abonotichus. The worshippers were astonished to find a blasphemer admitted to confidential intercourse with their chief; and Alexander undoubtedly succeeded, if not in disarming his guest's suspicions, yet in softening the vehemence of his dislike. He was so clever, so well informed, apparently so frank and open, that, as Lucian said, he would have taken in Epicurus himself. The search for evidence against him was dropped, the governor's guard was sent home, and Lucian after a prolonged visit accepted an offer from Alexander to send him by water to the Bosphorus. The prophet placed at his disposition one of his finest vessels, saw him on board, loaded him with presents, and so dismissed him.

Keener-witted man that Lucian was not alive on earth; yet his wit had not saved him from being to some extent deceived, and he had a near escape of paying with his life for his credulity. He had not been long at sea when he observed the pilot and crew consulting together. The crew were insisting upon something to which the pilot would not consent. The pilot at length came to him and said that 'Alexander's orders were that Lucian was to be thrown overboard; he had a wife and children, he had lived respectably for sixty years, and did not wish in his old age to stain his conscience with a murder. He could not go on to the Bosphorus, but he would put his passenger on shore.'

Lucian was landed in Bithynia. He was a person of considerable public influence. He had powerful friends in the province and at Rome. He was looked on favourably by Marcus Aurelius himself. He laid his story before the governor, not Lepidus, but another; and Lucian, if any one, might be assured that what he said would receive attention. But in an era of belief, reason and fact are powerless; the governor told him that if he could convict Alexander on the clearest evidence it would be impossible to punish him. Prophet he was in the opinion of the whole country, and prophet he

would remain. Lucian was as little successful as his predecessors, and his interference had gained him nothing except materials for the singular account which he has left behind. Rutilian was abandoned to fate and to the daughter of the Moon, and the glories of the prophet of Abonotichus were established above the reach of calumny. The Emperor bestowed distinctions on him. The name of his town was changed. Coins were struck, and now are extant, with 'the sweet one's' face on one side and Alexander's on the other. He lived to be an old man, and died with his fame undimmed and the belief in him unabated. What became of the snake, history omits to tell.

The superstition did not break in pieces at once. The oracle continued to prophesy after Alexander's death, and there was a competition among the disciples as to which of them was to succeed him. The favourite candidate was an old physician, who, Lucian says, ought not to have been found in such company. The dispute was referred at last to Rutilian, who decided that no successor was needed. Alexander was not dead, but was translated merely into a better world, from which he still watched over his faithful followers.

So ends this singular story, valuable for the light

which it throws on a critical epoch in human history, and especially on the disposition of the people among whom Paul and Barnabas were taken for gods, and among whom Paul founded his seven Churches. Christianity exactly met what they were searching for in an ennobling and purifying form, and saved those who accepted it from being the victims of sham prophets like Alexander. To persons so circumstanced, men of intellect like Lucian addressed themselves in vain. The science of Epicurus was merely negative. He might insist that miracles were an illusion, and that the laws of nature were never broken; but to the human heart craving for light from heaven, and refusing to be satisfied without it, Epicurus had not a word to say, not a word of what lay behind the veil, not a word which would serve for guidance in the paths of ordinary duty. Intellect and experience may make it probable to thoughtful persons that morality and happiness go together; but when all is said, clever men are found of a different opinion; and if the human race had waited to recognize the sanctions of moral obligation till science had made out on what they rested to its own satisfaction, the first steps out of barbarism would never have been taken. Knowledge is a plant which grows but slowly. Those who gather knowledge

must live before they can learn. How to live therefore, how to distinguish good from evil, press first for an immediate answer. And the answer was given by conscience whole æons before reflecting intellect had constructed its theories of expediency and the greatest happiness of the greatest number.

Out of conscience grows religion; but religion when St. Paul came was dead, and the educated multitudes in the Empire were sitting by the body of it, unable to believe that it was gone, and still passionately hoping that the silent gods would again speak to them out of heaven. So intense was the longing, that reason had abdicated its proper function; any plausible pretender could collect disciples in millions; and to an audience thus prepared to receive it, Christianity was originally offered. Independent of philosophy, the better sort of men hate evil and impurity; their instincts were recognized and justified in the new creed, and they welcomed it as a reviving principle of moral life. It did not save them from illusions which men of science would have escaped. Holiness of life is no protection against freaks of imagination; God is so near to the believer that he sees His action everywhere, and the hagiology of the early Church is as full of legend as the pagan mythology. The apocryphal gospels

breathe a spirit to the full as credulous as the story of the incarnation of Glycon at Abonotichus; with this essential and enormous difference, however, that the credulity of the Christians was dominated by conscience, and they detected a polluted impostor with as sure an instinct as the most cultivated Epicurean.

CHENEYS AND THE HOUSE OF RUSSELL.

[*FRASER'S MAGAZINE. 1879.*]

'THE gardener and his wife,' Mr. Tennyson tells us, 'laugh at the claims of long descent.' If it be so, the laugh is natural, for our first parents were 'novi homines,' and could not appreciate what they did not possess. Nevertheless, in all nations which have achieved any kind of eminence, particular families have stood out conspicuously for generation after generation as representatives of political principles, as soldiers or statesmen, as ruling in their immediate neighbourhoods with delegated authority, and receiving homage voluntarily offered. They have furnished the finer tissues in the corporate body of the national life, and have given to society its unity and coherence. In times of war they have fallen freely on the battle-field. In times of discord and civil strife their most illustrious members have

been the first to bleed on the scaffold. An English family, it has been said, takes rank according to the number of its members which have been executed. With men, as with animals and plants, peculiar properties are propagated by breeding. Each child who has inherited a noble name feels a special call to do no dishonour to it by unworthy actions. The family falls in pieces when its characteristics disappear. But, be the cause what it may, there is no instance, ancient or modern, of any long-protracted national existence where an order of aristocracy and gentry is not to be found preserving their identity, their influence, and their privileges of birth through century after century. They have no monopoly of genius. A gifted man rises out of the people, receiving his patent of nobility, as Burns said, 'direct from Almighty God.' He makes a name and a position for himself. But when the name is made, he hands it on, with distinction printed upon it, to his children and his children's children. More is expected from the sons of eminent parents than from other men, and if the transmitted quality is genuine more comes out of them. It is not talent. Talent is but partially hereditary, if at all. The virtue that runs in the blood is superiority of courage or character; and courage and character, far more than

cleverness, are the conditions indispensable for national leaders. Thus without exception, in all great peoples, hereditary aristocracies have formed themselves, and when aristocracies have decayed or disappeared the state has degenerated along with them. The fall of a nobility may be a cause of degeneracy, or it may only be a symptom; but the phenomenon itself is a plain matter of fact, true hitherto under all forms of political constitution, monarchic, oligarchic, or republican. Republics have held together as long as they have been strung with patrician sinews; when the sinews crack the republic becomes a democracy, and the unity of the commonwealth is shivered into a heap of disconnected atoms, each following its own laws of gravitation towards its imagined interests. Athens and Rome, the Italian Republics, the great kingdoms which rose out of the wreck of the Roman Empire, tell the same story. The modern Spaniard reads the records of the old greatness of his country on the tombs of the Castilian nobles, and in the ruins of their palaces. They and the glory of the Spanish race have departed together. The Alvas and the Olivarez's, the Da Leyvas and Mendozas may have deserved their fall; but when they fell, and no others had arisen in their places, the nation fell also.

Hitherto no great state has been able to sustain itself in a front place without aristocracy of some kind maintained on the hereditary principle. On this point the answer of history is uniform. The United States may inaugurate a new experience. With the one exception of the Adams's, the great men who have shown as yet in American history have no representatives to stand at present in the front political ranks. There are no Washingtons, no Franklins, no Jeffersons, no Clays or Randolphs, now governing States or leading debates in Congress. How long this will continue, how long the determination that all men shall start equal in the race of life will prevail against the instinctive tendencies of successful men to perpetuate their names, is the most interesting of political problems. The American nationality is as yet too young for conclusions to be built on what it has done hitherto, or has forborne to do. We shall know better two centuries hence whether equality and the ballot-box provide better leaders for a people than the old methods of birth and training. France was cut in pieces in the revolution of 1793, and flung into the Medean caldron, expecting to emerge again with fresh vitality. The rash experiment has not succeeded up to this time, and here too we must wait for what her future

will bring forth. So far the nations which have democratized themselves have been successful in producing indefinite quantities of money. If money and money-making will secure their stability, they may look forward hopefully—not otherwise.

We, too, have travelled far on the same road. We can continue to say, 'Thank God we have still a House of Lords,' but it is a House of Lords which is allowed to stand with a conditional tenure. It must follow, it must not lead, the popular will. It has been preserved rather as an honoured relic of a state of things which is passing away, than as representing any actual forces now existing. We should not dream of creating a hereditary branch of legislature if we had to begin over again; being there, we let it remain as long as it is harmless. Nevertheless, great families have still a hold upon the country, either from custom or from a sense of their value. Fifty years are gone since the great democratic Reform Bill, yet the hereditary peers must still give their consent to every law which passes. Their sons and cousins form a majority in the House of Commons, and even philosophic Radicals doubt if the character of the House would be improved without men there whose position in society is secured, and who can therefore afford to be patriotic.

How long a privileged order will hold its ground against the tendencies of the age depends upon itself, and upon the objects which it places before itself. If those who are within the lines retain, on the whole, a superior tone to those outside, and if access to the patrician order is limited to men who have earned admission there by real merit, the Upper House will be left in spite of ballot and universal suffrage, or perhaps by means of them, for generations to come. But the outlook is not without its ugly features, and should anything happen to stir the passions of the people as they were stirred half a century ago, the English peerage would scarcely live through another storm.

Whatever future may be in store for them, the past at any rate is their own, and they are honourably proud of it. The Roman preserved in his palace the ashes of his titled ancestors, and exhibited their images in his saloons. The English noble hangs the armour which was worn at Flodden or at Crecy in his ancestral hall. The trophies and relics of generations are among the treasures of his family. The stately portraits of his sires look down upon him from the walls of his dining-room. When he dies his desire is, like the prayer of the Hebrews, to be buried in the sepulchre of his fathers. There

only is the fitting and peaceful close of a life honourably spent. There the first founder of the family and his descendants rest side by side, after time has ceased for each of them, to be remembered together by the curious who spell through their epitaphs, and to dissolve themselves into common dust. Occasionally, as a more emphatic memorial, the mausoleum becomes a mortuary chapel attached to some parish church or cathedral. The original purpose was of course that a priest, specially appointed, should say masses there immediately close to the spot where their remains were lying. The custom has outlived the purpose of it, and such chapels are to be met with in Protestant countries as often as in Catholic. The most interesting that I ever saw is that of the Mendozas in the cathedral at Burgos. It is the more affecting because the Mendozas have ceased to exist. Nothing survives of them save their tombs, which, splendid as they are, and of the richest materials, are characteristically free from meretricious ornament. There lie the figures of the proudest race in the whole nobility of Spain; knight and lady, prelate and cardinal. The stories of the lives of most of them are gone beyond recovery, and yet in those stone features can be read character as pure and grand as ever

did honour to humanity. If a single family could produce so magnificent a group, we cease to wonder how Spain was once the sovereign of Europe, and the Spanish Court the home of courtesy and chivalry.

Next in interest to the monuments of the Mendozas, and second to them only because the Mendozas themselves are gone, are the tombs of the house of Russell in the chapel at Cheneys, in Buckinghamshire. The claims of the Russells to honourable memory the loudest Radical will acknowledge. For three centuries and a half they have led the way in what is called progress. They rose with the Reformation. They furnished a martyr for the Revolution of 1688. The Reform Bill is connected for ever with the name of Lord John. To know the biographies of the dead Russells is to know English history for twelve generations; and if the progress with which we are so delighted leads us safely into the Promised Land, as we are bound to believe that it will, Cheneys ought to become hereafter a place of pious pilgrimage.

The village stands on a chalk hill rising from the little river Ches, four miles from Rickmansworth, on the road to Amersham. The estate belongs to the Duke of Bedford, and is pervaded by an aspect

of serene good manners, as if it was always Sunday. No vulgar noises disturb the general quiet. Cricket may be played there, and bowls and such games as propriety allows—but the oldest inhabitant can never have heard an oath spoken aloud, or seen a drunken man. Dirt and poverty are equally unknown. The houses, large and small, are solid and substantial, built of red brick, with high chimneys and pointed gables, and well-trimmed gardens before the doors. A Gothic fountain stands in the middle of the village green, under a cluster of tall elms, where picturesque neatly-dressed girls go for the purest water. Beyond the green a road runs, on one side of which stands the church and the parsonage, on the other the remains of the once spacious manor house, which was built by the first Earl of Bedford on the site of an old castle of the Plantagenet kings. One wing of the manor house only survives, but so well constructed, and of material so admirable, that it looks as if it had been completed yesterday. In a field under the window is an oak which tradition says was planted by Queen Elizabeth Bess. More probably it is as old as the Conquest. The entire spot, church, mansion, cottages, and people, form a piece of ancient England artificially preserved from the intrusion of modern ways. No

land is let on building lease in Cheneys to be disfigured by contractors' villas. No flaring shops, which such villas bring behind them, make the street hideous. A single miscellaneous store supplies the simple wants of the few inhabitants—the bars of soap, the bunches of dip candles, the tobacco in ounce packets, the tea, coffee, and sugar, the balls of twine, the strips of calico. Even the bull's-eyes and gingerbread for the children are not unpermitted, if they are honestly made and warranted not to be poisonous. So light is the business that the tidy woman who presides at the counter combines with it the duties of the post-office, which again are of the simplest kind. All is old-fashioned, grave, and respectable. No signs are to be found of competition, of the march of intellect, of emancipation, of the divine right of each man and woman to do what is good in their own eyes—of the blessed liberty which the House of Russell has been so busy in setting forward. The inhabitants of Cheneys live under authority. The voice of the Russells has been the voice of the emancipator—the hand has been the hand of the ruling noble.

The Manor House contains nothing of much interest. In itself, though a fragment, it is a fine specimen of the mason work of the Tudor times,

and if not pulled down will be standing strong as ever when the new London squares are turned to dust heaps. With its high-pitched roofs and its clusters of curiously twisted chimneys it has served as a model for the architecture of the village, the smallest cottages looking as if they had grown from seeds which had been dropped by the central mansion.

All this is pretty enough, but the attraction of the place to a stranger is the church and what it contains. I had visited it before more than once, but I wished to inspect the monuments more closely. I ran down from London, one evening in June, to the village inn, and in the morning, soon after sunrise, when I was in less danger of having the officious assistance thrust upon me of clerk or sexton, I sauntered over to see if I could enter. The keys were kept at an adjoining cottage. The busy matron was already up and at her work. When I told her that I had special permission she unlocked the church door and left me to myself. Within, as without, all was order. No churchwardens, it was plain enough, had ever been allowed to work their will at Cheneys. Nay, the unchallenged loyalty of the Bedford family to constitutional liberty must have saved the Church from the visits of the Com-

missioners of the Long Parliament. On the walls are old Catholic brasses, one representing a parish priest of the place with the date of 1512, and a scroll praying for mercy on his soul. Strange to think that this man had said mass in the very place where I was standing, and that the memory of him had been preserved by the Russells, till the wheel had come round again and a Catholic hierarchy had been again established in England, with its Cardinals and Archbishops and Bishops. Will mass be ever said in Cheneys again ?—not the sham mass of the Ritualists, but the real thing ? Who that looks on England now can say that it will not ? And four miles off is Amersham, where John Knox used to preach, and Queen Mary's inquisitors gathered their batches of heretics for Smithfield. On the pavement against the wall lies a stone figure of an old knight, finished only from the waist upwards. The knight is in his armour, his wife rests at his side; the hands of both of them reverently folded. Opening from the church on the north side, but private and not used for service, is the Russell Chapel. Below is the vault where the remains lie of most of the family who have borne the name for three centuries and a half.

On a stone tablet over the east window are the

words 'This Chapel is built by Anne, Countess of Bedford, wife to John, Earl of Bedford, A.D. 1556.' It was the year in which Queen Mary was most busy offering her sacrifices to persuade Providence to grant her an heir. The chapel, therefore, by a curious irony, must have been consecrated with Catholic ceremonies.

The earliest monument is the tomb of this Lady Anne[1] and her husband, and is one of the finest of its kind in Europe. The material is alabaster; the pink veins in the stone being abundant enough to give a purple tint to the whole construction. The workmanship is extremely elaborate, and belongs to a time when the temper of men was still manly and stern, and when the mediæval reverence for death was still unspoiled by insincerity and affectation. The hands are folded in the old manner. The figures are not represented as sleeping, but as in a trance, with the eyes wide open. The faces are evidently careful likenesses; the Earl has lost an eye in action—the lid droops over the socket as in life. His head rests on his corslet, his sword is at his side. He wears a light coronet and his beard falls low on his breast. The features do not denote

[1] Through some blunder, she is described on the monument as Lady Elizabeth.

a man of genius, but a loyal and worthy servant of the State, cautious, prudent, and thoughtful. The lady's face is more remarkable, and it would seem from the pains which have been taken with it that the artist must have personally known and admired her, while the Earl he may have known only by his portrait. The forehead of the Lady Anne is strong and broad, the nose large, the lips full but severely and expressively closed. She looks upward as she lies, with awe, but with a bold heart, stern as a Roman matron. The head is on a cushion, but the Earl's baldric would have formed as suitable a pillow for a figure so commanding and so powerful. It is a pity that we know so little of this lady. She was the daughter of Sir Guy Sapcote, of Huntingdonshire. Her mother was a Cheney, and through her the Cheneys estate fell to its present owners. She had been twice married and twice a widow when her hand was sought by Sir John Russell. At that time she was in the household of Catherine of Arragon; but she had no liking for the cause which Catherine represented, or for Catherine's daughter either. She died while Mary was still on the throne, but in her will she gave a significant proof that she at least had not bowed the knee when Baal was brought in again. She bequeathed her soul to Almighty

God, 'trusting only by the death and passion of his dear Son, Jesus Christ, to be saved.' This is all that can be said of the 'mighty mother' of the Russells to whose side they are gathered as they fall; but if the stern portrait speaks truth, her sons have inherited gifts from her more precious by far than the broad lands in Bedford and Huntingdon.

The Russells, or Rozels, are on the Battle Roll as having come from Normandy with the Conqueror. They played their part under the Plantagenets, not without distinction, and towards the end of the fifteenth century were a substantial family settled at Barwick, in Dorsetshire. In the year 1506, John, son and heir of the reigning head of the house, had returned from a tour on the continent, bringing back with him accomplishments rare at all times with young proud Englishmen, and at that day unheard of save among the officially-trained clergy. Besides his other acquisitions he could speak French, and probably German. It happened that in that winter the Archduke Philip, with his mad wife Joanna, sister of Catherine of Arragon, was on his way from the Low Countries to Spain. As he was going down channel he was driven by a gale into Weymouth, and having been extremely

sea-sick, he landed to recover himself. Foreign princes are a critical species of guest. The relations of Henry VII. with Joanna's father, Ferdinand, were just then on a doubtful footing. Prince Arthur was dead. Catherine was not yet married to his brother Henry, nor was it at all certain that she was to marry him; and when so great a person as the Archduke, and so nearly connected with Ferdinand, had come into England uninvited, the authorities in Dorsetshire feared to let him proceed on his voyage till their master's pleasure was known. A courier was despatched to London, and meanwhile Sir Thomas Trenchard, the most important gentleman in the neighbourhood, invited the whole party to stay with him at Wolverton Hall. Trenchard was Russell's cousin. His own linguistic capabilities were limited, and he sent for his young kinsman to assist in the royal visitors' entertainment. Russell went, and made himself extremely useful. Henry VII. having pressed the Archduke to come to him at Windsor, the Archduke carried his new friend along with him, and spoke so warmly of his talents and character to the king that he was taken at once into the household. So commenced the new birth of the Russell house. Most men have chances opened to them at one time or another. Young

for any kind of service, either with pen or sword, brain or hand. He went with Henry VIII. to his first campaign in France. He was at the siege of Thérouenne, and at the battle of the Spurs. For an interval he was employed in political negotiations. Then we find him one of sixteen English knights who held the lists against all comers at Paris on the marriage of Louis XII. with the Princess Mary. In the war of 1522 he lost his eye at the storming of Morlaix, and was knighted for his gallantry there. Immediately afterwards he was employed by Henry and Wolsey on an intricate and dangerous service. Louis XII. was dead. The friendship between England and France was broken, and Henry and his nephew, the Emperor Charles V., were leagued together against the young Francis. Charles was aiming at the conquest of Italy. Henry had his eye on the French crown, which he dreamt of recovering for himself. Francis had affronted his powerful kinsman and subject, the Duke of Bourbon. Bourbon had intimated that if England would provide him with money to raise an army, he would recognize Henry as his liege lord, and John Russell was the person sent to ascertain

whether Bourbon might be trusted to keep his word. Russell, it seems, was satisfied. The money was provided and was committed to Russell's care, and the great powers of Europe made their first plunge into the convulsions which were to last for more than a century. Little did Henry and Charles know what they were doing, or how often they would change partners before the game was over. Bourbon invaded Provence, Sir John Russell attending upon him with the English treasure. The war rolled across the Alps, and Russell saw the great battle fought at Pavia, where France lost all save honour, and the French king was the prisoner of the Emperor.

Then, if ever, was the time for Henry's dream to have been accomplished; but it became too clear that the throne of France was not at Bourbon's disposition, and that even if he had been willing and able to keep his word the Emperor had no intention of allowing him to keep it. Henry and Wolsey had both been foiled in the object nearest to their hearts, for Henry could not take the place of Francis, and Wolsey, who had meant to be pope, saw the Cardinal de Medici chosen instead of him. So followed a shift of policy. Charles V. was now the danger to the rest of Europe. Henry joined himself with France against his late ally. Francis was to be

liberated from his Spanish prison, and was to marry Henry's daughter. Catherine of Arragon was to be divorced, and Henry was to marry a French princess, or some one else in the French interest. The adroit Russell in Italy was to bring Milan, Venice, and the Papacy into the new confederacy. An ordinary politician looking then at the position of the pieces on the European chess-board, would have said that Charles, in spite of himself, would have been compelled to combine with the German princes, and to take up the cause of the Reformation. The Pope was at war with him. Clement, Henry, and Francis were heartily friends. Henry had broken a lance with Luther. Bourbon's army, which had conquered at Pavia, was recruited with lanzknechts, either Lutherans or godless ruffians. Bourbon's army was now Charles's; and food being scanty and pay not forthcoming, the duke was driven, like another Alaric, to fling himself upon Rome, and storm and plunder the imperial city. It is curious and touching to find Clement clinging in such a hurricane to England and Henry as his surest supports. Russell had been staying with him at the Vatican on the eve of the catastrophe. He had gone home before the Germans approached, and missed being present at the most extraordinary

scene in the drama of the sixteenth century, when the Holy Father, from the battlements of St. Angelo, saw his city sacked, his churches pillaged, his sacred sisterhoods outraged, his cardinals led in mockery on asses' backs through the streets by wild bands, acting under the order, or in the name, of the most Catholic King.

An attitude so extravagant could not endure. A little while, and the laws of spiritual attraction had forced the various parties into more appropriate relations. The divorce of Catherine went forward; the Pope fell back on Catherine's Imperial nephew. England broke with the Holy See, and the impulses which were to remodel the modern world flowed into their natural channels. Russell's friend, Thomas Cromwell, became Henry's chief minister; and Russell himself, though the scheme he had been employed to forward had burst like a bubble, still rose in his sovereign's confidence. He was at Calais with Henry in 1532 when Anne Boleyn was publicly received by Francis. He was active in the suppression of the monasteries, and presided at the execution of the Abbot of Glastonbury. Again, when Anne Boleyn fell into disgrace, Russell, who was now Privy Seal, was appointed with her uncle, the Duke of Norfolk, to examine into the charges

against her. Through all the changes of Henry's later years, when the scaffold became so near a neighbour of the Royal closet, Russell remained always esteemed and trusted. At the birth of the young Edward he was made a peer, as Baron Russell of Cheneys. The year after he received the Garter. As Warden of the Stannaries he obtained the lands and mines of the suppressed Abbey of Tavistock. When his old master died he was carried on with the rising tide of the Reformation; he took Miles Coverdale for his chaplain, and obtained the Bishopric of Exeter for him. At his house in the Strand was held the conference on the Eucharist, when the strangest of all human superstitions was banished for a time from the English liturgy. Lord Russell's vigorous hand suppressed the Catholic rebellion in Devonshire. The Earldom of Bedford came next. His estates grew with his rank. Woburn Abbey fell to him on easy terms, for the Lords of the Council were first in the field, and had the pick of the spoil. Faction never tempted him out of the even road. He kept aloof from the quarrels of the Seymours and the Dudleys. When Somerset was attainted, the choicest morsel of Somerset's forfeited estates—Covent Garden and 'the seven acres' —was granted to the Earl of Bedford. Edward's

death was a critical moment. Bedford, like the rest of his Council, signed the instrument for the succession of Lady Jane Grey. Like the rest, he changed his mind when he saw Lady Jane repudiated by the country. The blame of the conspiracy was thrown on the extreme Protestant faction. The moderate Liberals declared for Mary, and by retaining their places and their influence in the Council set limits to the reaction, and secured the next succession to Mary's sister. Mary's government became Catholic, but Russell continued Privy Seal. A rebellion broke out in Devonshire; this time a Protestant one. Bedford was the person who put it down. His last public act was to go with Lord Paget to Spain to bring a Spanish husband home for his queen. He sailed with Philip from Corunna. He was at the memorable landing at Southampton, and he gave away his mistress at the marriage at Winchester. A few months later he died, after fifty years of service in the most eventful period of modern English history. His services were splendidly rewarded, and he has been reproached in consequence as a trimmer and a time-server. But revolutions are only successful when they advance on a line lying between two extremes, and resulting from their compound action. To be a trimmer at such a time

is to have discerned the true direction in which events are moving, and to be a wise man in whom good sense is stronger than enthusiasm. John Russell's lot was cast in an era of convulsion, when Europe was split into hostile camps, when religion was a shuttlecock of faction, Catholics and Protestants, as they were alternately uppermost, sending their antagonists to stake or scaffold. Russell represented the true feeling of the majority of Englishmen. They were ready to move with the age, to shake off the old tyranny of the Church, to put an end to monastic idleness, and to repudiate the authority of the Pope. But they had no inclination to substitute dogmatic Protestantism for dogmatic Catholicism. They felt instinctively that theologians knew but little, after all, of the subject for which they were so eager to persecute each other, and that the world had other interests beside those which were technically called religious; and on one point through all that trying time they were specially determined, that they would have no second war in England of rival Roses, no more fields of Towton or Barnet. They would work out their reformation, since a reformation there was to be, within the law and by the forms of it, and if enthusiasts chose to break into rebellion, or even passively

to refuse obedience to the law like More or Fisher, they might be admired for their generous spirit, but they were struck down without hesitation or mercy. Who shall say that the resolution was not a wise one, or that men who acted upon it are proper objects of historical invective?

The mission to Spain rounds off John Russell's story. It commenced with his introduction to Philip's grandfather. It ended with Philip's marriage to the English Queen. Throughout his life his political sympathies were rather Imperial than French, as English feeling generally was. He was gone before the Marian persecution assumed its darker character; and until the stake became so busy, a wise liberal statesman might reasonably have looked on Mary's marriage with her cousin as promising peace for the country, and as a happy ending of an old quarrel.

Lady Anne lived to complete the Cheneys chapel; she died two years after her husband, and the Russells were then threatened with a change of fortune. The next Earl, Francis—Francis 'with the big head'—was born in 1528. His monument stands next that of his father and mother, and is altogether inferior to it. The two figures, the Earl himself and the Countess Margaret, are of

alabaster like the first, and though wanting in dignity, are not in themselves wholly offensive; but according to the vile taste of the seventeenth century, they are tawdrily coloured in white and red and gold, and are lowered from the worthiness of sculpture to the level of a hair-dresser's model or of the painted Highlander at the door of a tobacco shop. Piety in England had by this time passed over to the Puritans, and Art, divorced from its proper inspiration, represented human beings as no better than wearers of State clothes. The Earl 'with the big head' deserves a more honourable portrait of himself, or deserves at least that the paint should be washed off. He was brought forward early in public life. He was Sheriff of Bedfordshire when he was nineteen. He sate in the Parliament of 1553, when the Prayer-book was purged of idolatry. In religion, taught perhaps by his mother, he was distinctly Protestant, and when his father died he was laid hold of as suspect by Gardiner. He escaped and joined the English exiles at Geneva. At the accession of Elizabeth he was called home, restored to his estates, and placed on the Privy Council, and when it pleased Mary Stuart, then Queen of France, to assume the royal arms of England, and declare herself the rightful owner of the English crown, the Earl

of Bedford was sent to Paris to require that ambitious lady to limit those dangerous pretensions and to acknowledge her cousin's right.

Here it was that Bedford began his acquaintance with Mary Stuart; an acquaintance which was to be renewed under more agitating conditions. At Geneva, he had been intimate with the leading Reformers, Scotch as well as English. When Mary began her intrigues with the Catholic party in England, Bedford was sent to Berwick as Governor, where he could keep a watch over her doings, and be in constant communication with Knox and Murray. He received and protected Murray at the time of the Darnley marriage. Ruthven fled to him after the murder of Rizzio; and from Ruthven's lips Bedford wrote down the remarkable despatch, describing the details of the scene in that suite of rooms at Holyrood which has passed into our historical literature.

The Queen of Scots was regarded at this time by the great body of the English people as Elizabeth's indisputable heir. Catholic though she might be, her hereditary right was respected as Mary Tudor's had been, and had Elizabeth died while Darnley was alive, she would have succeeded as easily as James succeeded afterwards. When James was born he was greeted on his arrival in this world as a Prince

of the Blood Royal, and Bedford was sent to Stirling to the christening with fine presents and compliments from his mistress. The shadow of the approaching tragedy hung over the ceremony. Bedford was conducted to the nursery to see the child in his cradle. Among the gifts which he had brought was a font of gold, which held the water in which James was made a Christian. Mary, in return, hung a chain of diamonds on Bedford's neck; never missing an opportunity of conciliating an English noble. But the English ambassador was startled to observe that the Queen's husband seemed of less consideration in her Court than the meanest foot-boy. The Queen herself scarce spoke to him; the courtiers passed him by with disdain. Bedford set it down to the murder of Rizzio, which he supposed to be still unforgiven, and he gave Mary a kindly hint that the poor wretch had friends in England whom in prudence she would do well to remember. Two months after came Kirk o' Field, and then the Bothwell marriage, Carberry Hill, Lochleven, Langside, the flight to England, the seventeen years in which the caged eagle beat her wings against her prison bars; and, finally, the closing scene in the hall at Fotheringay.

As his father had supported the rights of Mary

Tudor, so the second Earl would have upheld the rights of Mary Stuart till she had lost the respect of the country. But after Darnley's death the general sense of England pronounced her succession to be impossible. Bedford stood loyally by his own mistress in the dangers to which she was exposed from the rage of the disappointed Catholics. He was not one of the Lords of the Council who were chosen to examine the celebrated Casket letters, for he was absent at Berwick; but he sate on the trial of the Duke of Norfolk, and he joined in sending him to the scaffold. He died in 1585, two years before Mary Stuart's career was ended, but not before it was foreseen what that end must be. One other claim must not be forgotten which the second Earl possesses upon the memory of Englishmen. The famous Drake was born upon his estate at Tavistock. The Earl knew and respected his parents, and was godfather to their child, who derived from him the name of Francis. It was strange to feel that the actual remains of the man who had played a part in these great scenes were lying beneath the stones half a dozen yards from me. He sleeps sound, and the jangle of human discord troubles him no more.

He had two sons, neither of whom is in the vaults at Cheneys. Francis, the eldest, was killed

while his father was alive, in a skirmish on the Scotch border. William fought at Zutphen by the side of Philip Sydney. For five years he was Viceroy of Ireland, which he ruled at least with better success than Essex, who came after him. This William was made Lord Russell of Thornhaugh, and brought a second peerage into the family. Their sister Anne was married to Ambrose Dudley, Earl of Warwick, the brother of Elizabeth's Leicester.

The third Earl, Edward, was the son of Francis who was killed in the north, and succeeded his grandfather when a boy of eleven. In him the family genius slept. He lived undistinguished and harmless, and died in 1627, having left unfulfilled even the simple duty of begetting an heir. He was followed by his cousin Francis, son of his uncle, Lord Thornhaugh, and the divided houses again became one.

This Francis was called the wise Earl. He was a true Russell, zealous for the Constitution and the constitutional liberties of England. He had been bred a lawyer, and understood all the arts of Parliamentary warfare. At the side of Eliot, and Pym, and Selden, he fought for the Petition of Right, and carried it by his own energy through the House of Lords. Naturally he made himself an object of animosity to the Court, and he was sent to the

Tower as a reward of his courage. They could not keep him as they kept Eliot, to die there. He was released, but the battle had to be waged with weapons which a Russell was not disposed to use. When he was released Parliamentary life in England was suspended. There was no place for a Russell by the side of Laud and Strafford, and Bedford set himself to improve his property and drain the marshes about Whittlesea and Thorney. If solid work well done, if the addition of hundreds of thousands of acres to the soil available for the support of English life, be a title to honourable remembrance, this Earl ranks not the lowest in the Cheneys pantheon. He and his countess lie in the vault, with several of their children who died in childhood; they are commemorated in a monument not ungraceful in itself, were not it too daubed with paint and vulgarized by gilding. One of the little ones is a baby, a bambino swaddled round with wrappings which had probably helped to choke the infant life out of it.

The wise Earl died immediately after the opening of the Long Parliament. William Russell, his eldest son, had been returned to the House of Commons along with Pym as member for Tavistock. The Bedford interest doubtless gave Pym his seat there.

His father's death removed him from the stormy atmosphere of the Lower House, and he was unequal to the responsibilities which his new position threw upon him. Civil war was not a theatre on which any Russell was likely to distinguish himself, and Earl William less than any of them. The old landmarks were submerged under the deluge. He was washed from side to side, fighting alternately in the field for King and Parliament. He signed the Covenant in 1645, but he found Woburn a pleasanter place than the council chamber, and thenceforward, till Cromwell's death, he looked on and took little part in public life. Charles twice visited him; once on his way back to Oxford after his failure at Chester, and again in 1647 when he was in the hands of the army, then quartered between Bedford and St. Albans. It was at the time of the army manifesto, when the poor King imagined that he could play off Cromwell against the Parliament, and in fact was playing away his own life. After the negotiations were broken off, Charles went from Woburn to Latimers, a place close to Cheneys, from the windows of which, in the hot August days, he must have looked down on the Cheneys valley and seen the same meadows that now stretch along the bottom, and the same hanging beech woods, and the same

river sparkling among its flags and rushes, and the cattle standing in the shallows. The world plunges on upon its way; generation follows generation, playing its part, and then ending. The quiet earth bears with them one after the other, and while all else changes, itself is changed so little.

This Earl was memorable rather from what befell him than from anything which he did. He was the first duke and he was the father of Lord William, whom English constitutional history has selected to honour as its chief saint and martyr. The Russells were not a family which was likely to furnish martyrs. They wanted neither courage, nor general decision of character, but they were cool and prudent; never changing their colours, but never rushing on forlorn hopes, or throwing their lives away on ill-considered enterprises.

Lord William, or Lord Russell, as he should be called, had perhaps inherited some exceptional quality in his blood. His mother was the beautiful Anne Carr, daughter of Carr, Earl of Somerset, the favourite of James I., and of Frances Howard, the divorced wife of the Earl of Essex, the hero and heroine of the great Oyer of poisoning, with its black surroundings of witchcraft and devilry. The old Earl Francis had sate upon their trial. He had been

horrified when his son had proposed to marry the child of so ominous a pair. But Lady Anne was not touched by the crimes of her parents. Her loveliness shone perhaps the more attractively against so dark a background. Her character must have been singularly innocent, for she grew up in entire ignorance that her mother had been tried for murder. The family opposition was reluctantly withdrawn, and young Russell married her.

This pair, Earl William—afterwards Duke—and the Lady Anne Carr, are the chief figures in the most ostentatious monument in the Russell chapel. They are seated opposite each other in an attitude of violent grief, their bodies flung back, their heads buried in their hands in the anguish of petrified despair. They had many children, medallions of whom are ranged on either side in perpendicular rows. In the centre is the eldest—the occasion of the sorrow so conspicuously exhibited—whose head fell in Lincoln's Inn Fields. The execution of this medallion is extremely good; the likeness—if we may judge from the extant portraits of Lord Russell—is very remarkable. The expression is lofty and distinguished, more nearly resembling that of the first Countess than that of any of her other descendants; but there is a want of breadth, and the

features are depressed and gloomy. It is a noble face, yet a face which tells of aspirations and convictions unaccompanied with the force which could carry them out into successful action. It stands with a sentence of doom upon it, the central object in a group of sculpture which, as a whole, is affected and hysterical. A man so sincere and so honourable deserves a simpler memorial, but it is not uncharacteristic of the pretentiousness and unreality which have been the drapery of the modern Whigs—their principles good and true in themselves, but made ridiculous by the extravagance of self-laudation.

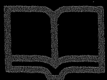
Lord Russell's wife is a beautiful figure in the story, and she lies by his side in the Cheneys vault. She was Rachel Wriothesley, daughter of Lord Southampton; her mother being a De Rouvigny, one of the great Huguenot families in France. The tragedy of Lord Russell scarcely needs repeating. The Restoration was an experiment, to try whether the liberties of England were compatible with the maintenance of a dynasty which was Catholic at heart, and was for ever leaning as far as the times would permit to an avowal of Catholic belief. Charles II. had been obliged to hide his real creed, and pretend to Protestantism as a condition of his return. But the Catholic party grew daily stronger.

Russell led the opposition in Parliament. ... to the bottom of his heart in the old English dread and hatred of Popery. He impeached Buckingham and Arlington. He believed to the last in the reality of the Popish plot, and he accepted Oates and Dangerfield as credible witnesses. He carried a Bill prohibiting Papists from sitting in Parliament. If Papists could not sit in Parliament, still less ought they to be on the throne, and the House of Commons, under his influence, passed the Exclusion Bill, cutting off the Duke of York. Russell carried it with his own hands to the House of Lords, and session after session, dissolution after dissolution, he tried to force the Lords to agree to it. No wonder that the Duke of York hated him, and would not spare him when he caught him tripping. When constitutional opposition failed, a true Russell would have been content to wait. But the husband of Lady Rachel drifted into something which, if not treason, was curiously like it, and under the shadow of his example a plot was formed by ruder spirits to save the nation by killing both the Duke and the King. Lord Russell was not privy to the Rye House affair, but he admitted that he had taken part in a

whom the country was to be on its guard was the heir to the crown.

Martyrs may be among the best of men, but they are not commonly the wisest. To them their particular theories or opinions contain everything which makes life of importance, and no formula ever conceived by man is of such universally comprehensive character that it must be acted upon at all hazards and regardless of time and opportunity. The enthusiast imagines that he alone has the courage of his convictions; but there is a faith, and perhaps a deeper faith, which can stand still and wait till the fruit is ripe, when it can be gathered without violence. Each has its allotted part. The noble generous spirit sacrifices itself and serves the cause by suffering. The indignation of the country at the execution of Sydney and Russell alienated England finally and fatally from the House of Stuart. Lord Russell and his friend were canonized as the saints of the Revolution, but the harvest itself was gathered by statesmen of more common clay, yet perhaps better fitted for the working business of life.

Lord Russell's trial was attended with every



feature which could concentrate the nation's attention upon it. The Duke of York was the actual and scarcely concealed prosecutor. Lady Rachel appeared in court as her husband's secretary. It is idle to say that he was unjustly convicted. He was privy to a scheme for armed resistance to the Government, and a Government which was afraid to punish him ought to have abdicated. Charles Stuart had been brought back by the deliberate will of the people. As long as he was on the throne he was entitled to defend both himself and his authority. Lord Russell was not, like Hampden, resisting an unconstitutional breach of the law. He was taking precautions against a danger which he anticipated, but which had not yet arisen. A Government may be hateful, and we may admire the courage which takes arms against it; but the Government, while it exists, is not to be blamed for protecting itself with those weapons which the law places in its hands.

He died beautifully. Every effort was made to save him. His father pleaded his own exertions in bringing about the Restoration. But the Duke of York was inexorable, and Lord Russell was executed. The Earl was consoled after the Revolution with a dukedom. His mother, Lady Anne, did not live to recover from the shock of her son's

death. In the midst of her wretchedness she found accidentally in a room in Woburn a pamphlet with an account of the Overbury murder. For the first time she learnt the dreadful story. She was found senseless, with her hand upon the open page, and never rallied from the blow.

Lady Rached lived far into the following century, and was a venerable old lady before she rejoined her husband. Once at least while alive Lady Rachel visited Cheneys Chapel. Her foot had stood on the same stones where mine were standing; her eyes had rested on the same sculptured figures.

'I have accomplished it,' she wrote, 'and am none the worse for having satisfied my longing mind, and that is a little ease—such degree of it as I must look for. I had some business there, for that to me precious and delicious friend desired I would make a little monument for us, and I had never seen the place. I had set a day to see it with him not three months before he was carried thither, but was prevented by the boy's illness.'

'She would make a little monument.' And out of that modest hope of hers has grown the monstrous outrage upon taste and simplicity, which we may piously hope was neither designed nor approved by the admirable Lady Rachel.

Lord Russell had pressed his devotion to the cause of liberty beyond the law; another Russell has been accused of treason to the sacred traditions of the family. Edward, the youngest brother of the fourth Earl Francis, who lies with the rest at Cheneys, had a son, who was one of the few Russells that were famous in arms—the admiral who won the battle of La Hogue, saved England from invasion, and was rewarded with the Earldom of Orford. Admiral Russell, like Marlborough, notwithstanding his brilliant services, was beyond doubt in correspondence with the Court of St. Germains, and equally beyond doubt held out hopes to the banished King that he might desert William and carry the fleet along with him. The real history of these mysterious transactions is unknown, and, perhaps, never will be known. William was personally unpopular. His manner was ungracious. He was guilty of the unpardonable sin of being a foreigner, which Englishmen could never forgive. A restoration like that of Charles II. seemed at one time, at least, one of the chances which were on the cards—and cautious politicians may not have felt they were committing any serious violation of trust in learning directly from James the securities for rational liberty which he was ready to concede. The

negotiation ended, however, in nothing—and it is equally likely that it was intended to end in nothing. James's own opinion was that 'Admiral Russell did but delude the King with the Prince of Orange's permission.' It is needless to speculate on the motives of conduct, which, if we knew them, we should be unable to enter into. To the student who looks back over the past, the element of uncertainty is eliminated. When the future, which to the living man is contingent and dim, obscuring his very duties to him, has become a realized fact, no effort of imagination will enable the subsequent inquirer to place himself in a position where the fact was but floating possibility. The services both of Churchill and Russell might be held great enough to save them from the censure of critics, who, in their arm-chairs at a distance of two centuries, moralize on the meannesses of great men.

The Admiral, at any rate, is not among his kindred in the Cheneys vault. He was buried at his own home, and his peerage and his lineage are extinct.

The Dukedom has made no difference in the attitude of the Bedford family. A more Olympian dignity has surrounded the chiefs of the house, but they have continued, without exception, staunch

friends of liberty; advocates of the things called Reform and Progress, which have taken the place of the old Protestant cause; and the younger sons have fought gallantly like their forefathers in the front ranks of the battle. We may let the dukes glide by wearing the honours which democracy allows to stand, because they are gradually ceasing to have any particular meaning. We pass on to the last Russell for whom the vault at Cheneys has unlocked 'its marble jaws;' the old statesman who filled so large a place for half a century in English public life, whose whole existence from the time when he passed out of childhood was spent in sharp political conflict, under the eyes of the keenest party criticisms, and who carried his reputation off the stage at last, unspotted by a single act which his biographers were called on to palliate.

To the Tories, in the days of the Reform Bill, Lord John Russell was the tribune of an approaching violent revolution. To the Radicals he was the Moses who was leading the English nation into the promised land. The alarm and the hope were alike imaginary. The wave has gone by, the crown and peerage and church and primogeniture stand where they were, and the promised land, alas! is a land not running with corn and wine, but running only with

rivers of gold, at which those who drink are not refreshed. To the enthusiasts of Progress the Reform Bill of 1832 was to be a fountain of life, in which society was to renew its youth like the eagle. High-born ignorance was to disappear from the great places of the nation; we were to be ruled only by Nature's aristocracy of genius and virtue; the inequalities of fortune were to be readjusted by a truer scale; and merit, and merit only, was to be the road to employment and distinction. We need not quarrel with a well-meant measure because foolish hopes were built upon it. But experienced men say that no one useful thing has been done by the Reformed Parliament which the old Parliament would have refused to do; and for the rest, it begins to be suspected that the reform of which we have heard so much is not the substitution of a wise and just government for a government which was not wise and just, but the abolishment of government altogether, and the leaving each individual man to follow what he calls his interest—a process under which the English people are becoming a congregation of contending atoms, scrambling every one of them to snatch a larger portion of good things than its fellow.

It is idle to quarrel with the inevitable. Each

generation has its work to do. Old England could continue no longer; and the problem for the statesmen of the first half of this century was to make the process of transformation a quiet and not a violent one. The business of Lord John Russell was to save us from a second edition of the French Revolution; and if he thought that something higher or better would come of it than we have seen, or are likely to see, it is well that men are able to indulge in such pleasant illusions to make the road the lighter for them. The storms of his early life had long passed away before the end came. He remained the leader of the Liberal party in the House of Commons during the many years in which the administration was in the Liberal hands; and he played his part with a prudence and good sense, of which we have been more conscious, perhaps, since the late absence of these qualities. Lord John Russell (or Earl Russell as he became) never played with his country's interests for the advantage of his party. Calumny never whispered a suspicion either of his honour or his patriotism, and Tory and Radical alike followed him when he retired with affectionate respect. In Cheneys church there is no monument of him. His statue will stand appropriately in the lobby of the House, where he fought and won his

many battles. It may be said of him, as was said of Peel, that we did not realize his worth till he was taken from us. In spite of progress, we have not produced another man who can make us forget his loss.

Here, too, beneath the stones, lies another pair, of whom the world spoke much, and knew but little—Earl Russell's young son, who died prematurely before his father, and that son's still younger wife. Lord Amberley also was a genuine Russell, full of talent, following truth and right wherever they seemed to lead him; and had life been allowed him he too would have left his mark on his generation. He was carried away, it was said, into extreme opinions. It is no unpardonable crime. His father, too, in his young days, had admired Napoleon and the French Revolution; had admired many things of which in age he formed a juster estimate. We do not augur well of the two-year-old colt whose paces are as sedate as those of an established roadster, who never rears when he is mounted, or flings out his heels in the overflow of heart and spirit. Our age has travelled fast and far in new ways, tossing off traditions old as the world as if they were no better than worn-out rags; and the ardent and hopeful Amberley galloped far in front in pursuit of what he

called Liberty, not knowing that it was a false phantom which he was following; not freedom at all,—but anarchy. The wise world held up its hands in horror; as if any man was ever good for anything whose enthusiasm in his youth has not outrun his understanding. Amberley, too, would have learnt his lesson had time been granted him. He would have learnt it in the best of schools—by his own experience. Happy those who have died young if they have left a name as little spotted as his with grosser faults and follies.

She, too, his companion, went along with him in his philosophy of progress, each most extravagant opinion tempting her to play with it. True and simple in herself, she had been bred in disdain of unreality. Transparent as air, pure as the fountain which bubbles up from below a glacier, she was encouraged by her very innocence in speculations against which a nature more earthly would have been on its guard. She so hated insincerity that in mere wantonness she trampled on affectation and conventionality, and she would take up and advocate theories which, if put in practice, would make society impossible, while she seemed to me as little touched by them herself as the seagull's wings are wetted when it plunges into the waves.

The singular ways of the two Amberleys were the world's wonder for a season or two. The world might as well have let them alone. The actual arrangements of things are so far from excellent that young ardent minds become Radical by instinct when they first become acquainted with the world as it actually is. Radicalism is tamed into reasonable limits when it has battered itself for a few years against the stubborn bars of fact, and the conversion is the easier when the Radical is the heir of an earldom. The Amberleys, who went farther than Lord Russell had ever done in the pursuit of imaginary Utopias, might have recoiled farther when they learnt that they were hunting after a dream. Peace be with them. They may dream on now, where the world's idle tattle can touch them no more.

The ghostly pageant of the Russells has vanished. The silent hours of the summer morning are past, and the sounds outside tell that the hamlet is awake and at its work. The quiet matron must resume the charge of the church keys, that intruders may not stray into the sanctuary unpermitted. In Catholic countries the church doors stand open; the peasant pauses on his way to the fields for a moment of meditation or a few words of prayer. The kneeling figures, on a week-day morning, are

more impressive than Sunday rituals or preacher's homily. It was so once here in Cheneys, in the time of the poor priest whose figure is still on the wall. Was the Reformation, too, the chase of a phantom? The freedom of the church at all events is no longer permitted here in Protestant England. I, too, must go upon my way back to the village inn, where—for such things have to be remembered—breakfast and a young companion are waiting for me. It is worth while to spend a day at Cheneys, if only for the breakfast—breakfast on fresh pink trout from the Ches, fresh eggs, fresh yellow butter, cream undefiled by chalk, and home-made bread untouched with alum. The Russells have been the apostles of progress, but there is no progress in their own dominion. The ducal warranty is on everything which is consumed here.

The sun was shining an hour ago. It is now raining; it rained all yesterday; the clouds are coming up from the south and the wind is soft as oil. The day is still before us, and it is a day made for trout fishing. The chapel is not the only attraction at Cheneys. No river in England holds finer trout, nor trout more willing to be caught. Why fish will rise in one stream and not in another is a problem which we must wait to understand, as Bret

Harte says, in 'another and a better world.' The Ches at any rate is one of the favoured waters. Great, too, is the Duke of Bedford—great in the millions he has spent on his tenants' cottages—great in the remission of his rents in the years when the seasons are unpropitious—great in the administration of his enormous property; but greater than all in the management of his fishing, for if he gives you leave to fish there, you have the stream for the day to yourself. You are in no danger of seeing your favourite pool already flogged by another sportsman, or of finding rows of figures before you fringing the river bank, waving their long wands in the air, each followed by his boy with basket and generally useless landing net. 'Competition' and 'the greatest happiness of the greatest number' are not heard of in this antique domain. A day's fishing at Cheneys means a day by the best water in England in the fisherman's paradise of solitude.

Such a day's privilege had been extended to me if I cared to avail myself of it, when I was coming down to see the chapel, and though my sporting days were over, and gun and rod had long lain undisturbed in their boxes, yet neither the art of fly-fishing, nor the enjoyment of it when once acquired and tasted, will leave us except with life.

bushes are, how near the casting line approaches them. If a gust of wind twists it into a heap, or sweeps it towards a dangerous bough, the wrist does something on the instant which sends the fly straight and unharmed into the water. Practice gives our different organs functions like the instinct of animals, who do what their habits require, yet know not what they do.

The small fish take freely—some go back into the water, the few in good condition into the basket, which, after a field or two, becomes perceptibly heavier. The governor, a small humble bee, used to be a good fly at Cheneys, and so did the black alder. Neither of them is of any use to-day. The season has been cold and late. The March brown answers best, with the never-failing red spinner. After running rapidly through two or three meadows, the river opens into a broad smooth shallow, where the trout are larger, and the water being extremely clear, are specially difficult to catch. In such a place as this, it is useless to throw your fly at random upon the stream. You must watch for a fish which is rising, and you must fish for him till you either catch him or disturb him. It is not enough to go below him and throw upwards, for though he lies with his head up-stream, his projecting eye looks

back over his shoulders. You must hide behind a bunch of rushes. You must crawl along the grass with one arm only raised. If the sun is shining and the shadow of your rod glances over the gravel, you may get up and walk away. No fish within sight will stir then to the daintiest cast.

I see a fish close to the bank on the opposite side, lazily lifting his head as a fly floats past him. It is a long throw, but the wind is fair and he is worth an effort—once, twice, three times I fail to reach him. The fourth I land the fly on the far bank, and draw it gently off upon his very nose. He swirls in the water like a salmon as he sweeps round to seize it. There is a splash—a sharp jerk, telling unmistakably that something has given way. A large fish may break you honestly in weeds or round a rock or stump, and only fate is to blame, but to let yourself be broken on the first strike is unpardonable. What can have happened? Alas, the red-spinner has snapped in two at the turn—a new fly bought last week at ——'s, whose boast it has been that no fly of his was ever known to break or bend.

One grumbles on these occasions, for it is always the best fish which one loses; and as imagination is free, one may call him what weight one pleases.

The damage is soon repaired. The basket fills fast as trout follows trout. It still rains, and I begin to think that I have had enough of it. I have promised to be at the mill at midday, and then we shall see.

Evidently the sky means mischief. Black thunder-clouds pile up to windward, and heavy drops continue falling. But there is a break in the south as I walk back by the bank—a gleam of sunshine spans the valley with a rainbow, and an actual May-fly or two sails by which I see greedily swallowed. The keeper is waiting; he looks scornfully into my basket. Fish—did I call these herrings fish? I must try the upper water at all events. The large trout were feeding, but the fly was not yet properly on—we can have our luncheon first.

How pleasant is luncheon on mountain-side or river's bank, when you fling yourself down on fern or heather after your morning's work, and no daintiest *entrée* had ever such flavour as your sandwiches, and no champagne was ever so exquisite as the fresh stream water just tempered from your whisky flask. Then follows the smoke, when the keeper fills his pipe at your bag, and old adventures are talked over, and the conversation wanders on through anecdotes and experiences, till, as you listen to the shrewd

sense and kindly feeling of your companion, you become aware that the steep difference which you had imagined to be created by education and habits of life had no existence save in your own conceit. Fortune is less unjust than she seems, and true hearts and clear-judging healthy minds are bred as easily in the cottage as the palace.

But time runs on, and I must hasten to the end of my story. The short respite from the wet is over. Down falls the rain again; rain not to be measured by inches, but by feet; rain such as has rarely been seen in England before this 'æstas mirabilis' of 1879. It looks hopeless, but the distance by the road to the top of the water is not great. We complain if we are caught in a shower; we splash along in a deluge, in boots and waterproof, as composedly as if we were seals or otters. The river is rising and, as seldom happens with a chalk stream, it is growing discoloured. Every lane is running with a brown stream, which finds its way at last into the main channel. The highest point is soon reached. The first hundred yards are shallow, and to keep the cattle from straying a high iron railing runs along the bank. Well I know that iron railing. You must stand on the lower bar to fish over it. If you hook a trout, you must play him from that uneasy

perch in a rapid current among weeds and stones, and your attendant must use his landing net through the bars. Generally it is the liveliest spot in the river, but nothing can be done there to-day. There is a ford immediately above, into which the thick road-water is pouring, and the fish cannot see the fly. Shall we give it up? Not yet. Further down the mud settles a little, and by this time even the road has been washed clean, and less dirt comes off it. The flood stirs the trout into life and hunger, and their eyes, accustomed to the transparency of the chalk water, do not see you so quickly.

Below the shallow there is a pool made by a small weir, over which the flood is now rushing—on one side there is an open hatchway, with the stream pouring through. The banks are bushy, and over the deepest part of the pool the stem of a large ash projects into the river. Yesterday, when the water was lower, the keeper saw a four-pounder lying under that stem. Between the weir and the trees it is an awkward spot, but difficulty is the charm of fly-fishing. The dangerous drop fly must be taken off; a drop fly is only fit for open water, where there is neither weed nor stump. The March brown is sent skimming at the tail of the casting line, to be dropped, if possible, just above the ash,

and to be carried under it by the stream. It has been caught in a root, so it seems; or it is foul somewhere. Surely no fish ever gave so dead a pull. No; it is no root. The line shoots under the bank. There is a broad flash of white just below the surface a moment's struggle, the rod springs straight, and the line comes back unbroken. The March brown is still floating at the end of it. It was a big fish, perhaps the keeper's very big one; he must have been lightly hooked, and have rubbed the fly out of his mouth.

But let us look closer. The red-spinner had played false in the morning; may not something like it have befallen the March brown? Something like it, indeed. The hook has straightened out as if, instead of steel, it had been made of copper. A pretty business! I try another, and another, with the same result. The heavy trout take them, and one bends and the next breaks. Oh! ——————! Well for Charles Kingsley that he was gone before he heard of a treason which would have broken his trust in man. You, in whose praise I have heard him so often eloquent! You who never dealt in shoddy goods. You who were faithful if all else were faithless, and redeemed the credit of English tradesmen! You had not then been in the school of progress

customers with cheap and nasty wares, fair-looking to the eye and worthless to the touch and trial. In those days you dealt with gentlemen, and you felt and traded like a gentleman yourself. And now you too, have gone the way of your fellows. You are making a fortune, as you call it, out of the reputation which you won honourably in better days. You have given yourself over to competition and semblance. You have entered for the race among the sharpers and will win by knavery and tricks like the rest. I will not name you for the sake of the old times, when C. K. and I could send you a description of a fly from the furthest corner of Ireland, and by return of post would come a packet tied on hooks which Kendal and Limerick might equal, but could not excel. You may live on undenounced for me; but read C. K.'s books over again; repent of your sins, go back to honest ways, and renounce the new gospel in which whosoever believes shall not be saved.

But what is to be done? Spite of the rain the river is now covered with drowned May-flies, and the trout are taking them all round. I have new May-flies from the same quarter in my book, but it will be mere vexation to try them. Luckily for

me there are a few old ones surviving from other days. The gut is brown with age—but I must venture it. If this breaks I will go home, lock away my rod, and write an essay on the effects of the substitution of Political Economy for the Christian faith.

On, then, goes one of these old flies. It looks well. It bears a mild strain, and, like Don Quixote with his helmet, I will not put it to a severe trial. Out it shoots over the pool, so natural-looking that. I cannot distinguish it from a real fly which floats at its side. I cannot, nor can that large trout in the smooth water above the fall. He takes it, springs into the air, and then darts at the weir to throw himself over. If he goes down he is lost Hold on. He has the stream to help him, and not an inch of line can be spared. The rod bends double, but the old gut is true. Down the fall he is not to go. He turns up the pool, he makes a dart for the hatchway,—but if you can stand a trout's first rush you need not fear him in fair water afterwards. A few more efforts and he is in the net and on the bank, not the keeper's four-pounder, but a handsome fish, which I know that he will approve.

He had walked down the bank pensively while

I was in the difficulty with my flies, meditating, perhaps, on idle gentlemen, and reflecting that if the tradesmen were knaves the gentlemen were correspondingly fools. He called to me to come to him just as I had landed my trout. He was standing by the side of the rapid stream at the head of the mill pool. It was as he had foretold; the great fish had come up, and were rolling like salmon on the top of the water gulping down the May-flies. Even when they are thus carelessly ravenous, the clearness of the river creates a certain difficulty in catching them in ordinary times, but to-day the flood made caution superfluous. They were splashing on the surface close to our feet, rolling about in a negligent gluttony which seemed to take from them every thought of danger, for a distance of at least three hundred yards.

There was no longer any alarm for the tackle, and it was but to throw the fly upon the river, near or far, for a trout instantly to seize it. There was no shy rising where suspicion balks the appetite. The fish were swallowing with a deliberate seriousness every fly which drifted in their reach, snapping their jaws upon it with a gulp of satisfaction. The only difficulty was in playing them when hooked with a delicate chalk-stream casting-line. For an

hour and a half it lasted, such an hour and a half of trout fishing as I had never seen and shall never see again. The ease of success at last became wearisome. Two large baskets were filled to the brim. Accident had thrown in my way a singular opportunity which it would have been wrong to abuse, so I decided to stop. We emptied out our spoils upon the grass, and the old keeper said that long as he had known the river he had never but once seen so many fish of so large size taken in the Ches in a single day by a single rod.

How can a reasonable creature find pleasure in having performed such an exploit? If trout were wanted for human food, a net would have answered the purpose with less trouble to the man and less annoyance to the fish. Throughout creation man is the only animal—man, and the dogs and cats which have learnt from him—who kills, for the sake of killing, what he does not want, and calls it sport. All other animals seize their prey only when hungry, and are satisfied when their hunger is appeased.

Such, it can only be answered, is man's disposition. He is a curiously formed creature, and the appetite for sport does not seem to disappear with civilization. The savage in his natural state hunts, as the animals hunt, to support his life; the sense

of sport is strongest in the elaborately educated and civilized. It may be that the taste will die out before 'Progress.' Our descendants perhaps, a few generations hence, may look back upon a pheasant battue as we look back on bear-baiting and bull-fighting, and our mild offspring, instructed in the theory of development, may see a proof in their fathers' habits that they come of a race who were once crueller than tigers, and will congratulate themselves on the change. So they will think, if they judge us as we judge our forefathers of the days of the Plantagenets and Tudors, and both we and they may be perhaps mistaken. Half the lives of men in mediæval Europe was spent in fighting. Yet from mediæval Europe came the knightly graces of courtesy and chivalry. The modern soldier, whose trade is war, yet hates and dreads war more than civilians dread it. The sportsman's knowledge of the habits of animals gives him a kindly feeling towards them notwithstanding, and sporting tends rather to their preservation than their destruction. The human race may become at last vegetarians and water-drinkers. Astræa may come back, and man may cease to take the life of bird, or beast, or fish. But the lion will not lie down with the lamb, for lambs and lions will no

longer be; the eagle will not feed beside the dove, for doves will not be allowed to consume grain which might have served as human food, and will be extinct as the dodo. It may be all right and fit and proper: a world of harmless vegetarians may be the appropriate outcome of the development of humanity. But we who have been born in a ruder age do not aspire to rise beyond the level of our own times. We have toiled, we have suffered, we have enjoyed, as the nature which we have received has prompted us. We blame our fathers' habits; our children may blame ours in turn; yet we may be sitting in judgment, both of us, on matters of which we know nothing.

The storm has passed away, the dripping trees are sparkling in the warm and watery sunset. Back, then, to our inn, where dinner waits for us, the choicest of our own trout, pink as salmon, with the milky curd in them, and no sauce to spoil the delicacy of their flavour. Then bed, with its lavender-scented sheets and white curtains, and sleep, sound sweet sleep, that loves the country village and comes not near a London bedroom. In the morning, adieu to Cheneys, with its red gable-ends and chimneys, its venerable trees, its old-world manners, and the solemn memories of its mausoleum.

Adieu, too, to the river, which, 'though men may come and men may go,' has flowed and will flow on for ever, winding among its reed beds, murmuring over its gravelly fords, heedless of royal dynasties, uncaring whether Cheney or Russell calls himself lord of its waters, graciously turning the pleasant corn mills in its course, unpolluted by the fetid refuse of manufactures, and travelling on to the ocean bright and pure and uncharged with poison, as in the old times when the priest sung mass in the church upon the hill and the sweet soft matins bell woke the hamlet to its morning prayers.

A SIDING AT A RAILWAY STATION.

[*FRASER'S MAGAZINE. 1879.*]

SOME years ago I was travelling by railway, no matter whence or whither. I was in a second-class carriage. We had been long on the road, and had still some distance before us, when one evening our journey was brought unexpectedly to an end by the train running into a siding. The guards opened the doors, we were told that we could proceed no further, and were required to alight. The passengers were numerous, and of all ranks and sorts. There were third class, second, first, with saloon carriages for several great persons of high distinction. We had ministers of state, judges on circuit, directors, leading men of business, idle young men of family who were out amusing themselves, an archbishop, several ladies, and a duke and duchess with their suite. These favoured travellers had Pullman cars to themselves and

occupied as much room as was allotted to scores of plebeians. I had amused myself for several days in observing the luxurious appurtenances by which they were protected against discomfort—the piles of cushions and cloaks, the baskets of dainties, the novels and magazines to pass away the time, and the profound attention which they met with from the conductors and station-masters on the line. The rest of us were a miscellaneous crowd—commercial people, lawyers, artists, men of letters, tourists moving about for pleasure or because they had nothing to do; and in the third-class carriages, artisans and labourers in search of work, women looking for husbands or for service, or beggars flying from starvation in one part of the world to find it follow them like their shadows, let them go where they pleased. All these were huddled together, feeding hardly on such poor provisions as they carried with them or could pick up at the stopping-places. No more consideration was shown them than if they had been so many cattle. But they were merry enough: songs and sounds of laughter came from their windows, and notwithstanding all their conveniences, the languid-looking fine people in the large compartments seemed to me to get through their journey with less enjoyment after

all than their poor fellow-travellers. These last appeared to be of tougher texture, to care less for being jolted and shaken, to be better-humoured and kinder to one another. They had found life go hard with them wherever they had been, and not being accustomed to have everything which they wished for, they were less selfish and more considerate.

The intimation that our journey was for the present at an end came on most of us as an unpleasant surprise. The grandees got out in a high state of indignation. They called for their servants, but their servants did not hear them, or laughed and passed on. The conductors had forgotten to be obsequious. All classes on the platform were suddenly on a level. A beggar-woman hustled the duchess as she was standing astonished because her maid had left her to carry her own bag. The patricians were pushed about among the crowd with no more concern than if they had been common mortals. They demanded loudly to see the station-master. The minister complained angrily of the delay; an important negotiation would be imperilled by his detention, and he threatened the company with the displeasure of his department. A consequential youth who had just heard of the death of his elder brother was flying home to take his

inheritance. A great lady had secured, as she had hoped, a brilliant match for her daughter; her work over, she had been at the baths to recover from the dissipation of the season; difficulty had risen unlooked for, and unless she was at hand to remove it, the worst consequences might be feared. A banker declared that the credit of a leading commercial house might fail unless he could be at home on the day fixed for his return: he alone could save it. A solicitor had the evidence in his portmanteau which would determine the succession to the lands and title of an ancient family. An elderly gentleman was in despair about his young wife, whom he had left at home; he had made a will by which she was to lose his fortune if she married again after his death, but the will was lying in his desk unsigned. The archbishop was on his way to a synod where the great question was to be discussed whether gas might be used at the altar instead of candles. The altar candles were blessed before they were used, and the doubt was whether gas could be blessed. The right reverend prelate conceived that if the gas tubes were made in the shape of candles the difficulty could be got over, but he feared that without his moderating influence the majority might

come to a rash decision. All these persons were clamouring over their various anxieties with the most naïve frankness, the truth coming freely out whatever it might be. One distinguished-looking lady in deep mourning, with a sad gentle face, alone was resigned and hopeful. It seemed that her husband had been stopped not long before at the same station. She thought it possible that she might meet him again.

The station-master listened to the complaints with composed indifference. He told the loudest that they need not alarm themselves. The State would survive the absence of the minister. The minister, in fact, was not thinking of the State at all, but of the party triumph which he expected; and the peerage which was to be his reward, the station-master said would now be of no use to him. The youth had a second brother who would succeed instead of him, and the tenants would not be inconvenienced by the change. The fine lady's daughter would marry to her own liking instead of her mother's, and would be all the happier for it. The commercial house was already insolvent, and the longer it lasted the more innocent people would be ruined by it. The boy whom the lawyer intended to make into a rich baronet was now working industriously at school,

and would grow up a useful man. If a great estate fell in to him he would be idle and dissolute. The old man might congratulate himself that he had escaped so soon from the scrape into which he had fallen. His wife would marry an adventurer, and would suffer worse from inheriting his fortune. The archbishop was commended for his anxiety. His solution of the candle problem was no doubt an excellent one; but his clergy were now provided with a harmless subject to quarrel over, and if it was adopted they might fall out over something else which might be seriously mischievous.

'Do you mean, then, that you are not going to send us forward at all?' the minister inquired sternly.

'You will see,' the station-master answered with a curious short laugh. I observed that he looked more gently at the lady in mourning. She had said nothing, but he knew what was in her mind, and though he held out no hope in words that her wish would be gratified, he smiled sadly, and the irony passed out of his face.

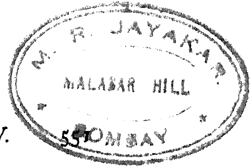
The crowd, meanwhile, were standing about the platform whistling tunes or amusing themselves, not ill-naturedly, at the distress of their grand companions. Something considerable was happening.

But they had so long experienced the ups and downs of things that they were prepared for what fortune might send. They had not expected to find a Paradise where they were going, and one place might be as good as another. They had nothing belonging to them except the clothes they stood in and their bits of skill in their different trades. Wherever men were, there would be need of cobblers and tailors, and smiths and carpenters. If not, they might fall on their feet somehow if there was work to be done of any sort.

Presently a bell rang, a door was flung open, and we were ordered into a waiting-room, where we were told that our luggage was to be examined. It was a large barely furnished apartment, like the *salle d'attente* at the Northern Railway Station at Paris. A rail ran across, behind which we were all penned; opposite to us was the usual long table, on which were piled boxes, bags, and portmanteaus, and behind them stood a row of officials, in a plain uniform with gold bands round their caps, and the dry peremptory manner which passengers accustomed to deference so particularly dislike. At their backs was a screen extending across the room, reaching half way to the ceiling; in the rear of it there was apparently an office.

We each looked to see that our particular belongings were safe, but we were surprised to find that we could recognize none of them. Packages there were in plenty, alleged to be the property of the passengers who had come in by the train. They were arranged in the three classes—first, second, and third—but the proportions were inverted: most of it was labelled as the luggage of the travellers in fustian, who had brought nothing with them but what they carried in their hands; a moderate heap stood where the second-class luggage should have been, and some of superior quality, but none of us could make out the shape of our own trunks. As to the grand ladies and gentlemen, the innumerable articles which I had seen put as theirs into the van were nowhere to be found. A few shawls and cloaks lay upon the planks, and that was all. There was a loud outcry, but the officials were accustomed to it, and took no notice. The station-master, who was still in charge of us, said briefly that the saloon luggage would be sent forward in the next train. The late owners would have no more use for it, and it would be delivered to their friends.

The late owners! Were we no longer actual owners, then? My individual loss was not great, and, besides, it might be made up to me, for I saw



my name on a strange box on the table, and being of curious disposition, the singularity of the adventure made it interesting to me. The consternation of the rest was indescribable. The minister supposed that he had fallen among Communists, who disbelieved in property, and was beginning a speech on the elementary conditions of society, when silence was called, and the third-class passengers were called to advance, that their boxes might be opened. Each man had his own carefully docketed. The lids flew off, and within, instead of clothes and shoes and dressing apparatus and money and jewels and such like, were simply samples of the work which he had done in his life. There was an account-book also, in which was entered the number of days which he had worked, the number and size of the fields, &c., which he had drained and enclosed and ploughed, the crops which he had reaped, the walls which he had built, the metal which he had dug out and smelted and fashioned into articles of use to mankind, the leather which he had tanned, the clothes which he had woven—all entered with punctual exactness; and on the opposite page, the wages which he had received, and the share which had been allotted to him of the good things which he had helped to create.

Besides his work, so specifically called, there were

his actions—his affection for his parents, or his wife and children, his self-denials, his charities, his purity, his truth, his honesty, or, it might be, ugly catalogues of sins and oaths and drunkenness and brutality. But inquiry into action was reserved for a second investigation before a higher commissioner. The first examination was confined to the literal work done by each man for the general good—how much he had contributed, and how much society had done for him in return; and no one, it seemed, could be allowed to go any further without a certificate of having passed this test satisfactorily. With the workmen, the balance in most instances was found enormously in their favour. The state of the case was so clear that the scrutiny was rapidly got over, and they and their luggage were passed in to the higher court. A few were found whose boxes were empty, who had done nothing useful all their lives, and had subsisted by begging and stealing. These were ordered to stand aside till the rest of us had been disposed of.

The saloon passengers were taken next. Most of them, who had nothing at all to show, were called up together, and were asked what they had to say for themselves. A well-dressed gentleman who spoke for the rest, said that the whole investigation was

a mystery to him. He and his friends had been born to good fortunes, and had found themselves on entering upon life, amply provided for. They had never been told that work was required of them, either work with their hands or work with their heads—in fact, work of any kind. It was right, of course, for the poor to work, because they could not honestly live otherwise. For themselves, they had spent their time in amusements, generally innocent They had paid for everything which they had consumed. They had stolen nothing, taken nothing from any man by violence or fraud. They had kept the commandments, all ten of them, from the time when they were old enough to understand them. The speaker, at least, declared that he had no breach of any commandment on his own conscience, and he believed he might say as much of his companions. They were superior people, who had been always looked up to and well spoken of, and to call upon them to show what they had done was against reason and equity.

'Gentlemen,' said the chief official, 'we have heard this many times; yet as often as it is repeated we feel fresh astonishment. You have been in a world where work is the condition of life. Not a meal can be had by any man that some one has not

worked to produce. Those who work deserve to eat; those who do not work deserve to starve. There are but three ways of living: by working, by stealing, or by begging. Those who have not lived by the first have lived by one of the other two. And no matter how superior you think yourselves, you will not pass here till you have something of your own to produce. You have had your wages beforehand—ample wages, as you acknowledge yourselves. What have you to show?'

'Wages!' the speaker said. 'We are not hired servants; we received no wages. What we spent was our own. All the orders we received were that we were not to do wrong. We have done no wrong. I appeal to the higher court.'

But the appeal could not be received. To all who presented themselves with empty boxes, no matter who they were, or how excellent their characters appeared to one another, there was the irrevocable answer, 'No admittance, till you come better furnished.' All who were in this condition, the duke and duchess among them, were ordered to stand aside with the thieves. The duchess declared that she had given the finest parties in the season, and as it was universally agreed that they had been the most tedious, and that no one had found any

pleasure there, a momentary doubt rose whether they might not have answered some useful purpose in disgusting people with such modes of entertainment; but no evidence of this was forthcoming: the world had attended them because the world had nothing else to do; and she and her guests had been alike unprofitable. Thus the large majority of the saloon passengers was disposed of. The minister, the archbishop, the lawyer, the banker, and others, who, although they had no material work credited to them, had yet been active and laborious in their different callings, were passed to the superior judges.

Our turn came next—ours of the second class—and a motley gathering we were. Busy we must all have been, from the multitude of articles which we found assigned to us. Manufacturers with their wares, solicitors with their lawsuits, doctors and clergymen with the bodies and souls which they had saved or lost, authors with their books, painters and sculptors with their pictures and statues. But the hard test was applied to all that we had produced—the wages which we had received on one side, and the value of our exertions to mankind on the other—and imposing as our performances looked when laid out to be examined, we had been paid, most of

us, out of all proportion to what we were found to have deserved. I was reminded of a large compartment in the Paris Exhibition where an active gentleman, wishing to show the state of English literature, had collected copies of every book, review, pamphlet, or newspaper which had been published in a single year. The bulk was overwhelming, but the figures were only decimal points, and the worth of the whole was a fraction above zero. A few of us were turned back summarily among the thieves and the fine gentlemen and ladies—speculators who had done nothing but handle money which had clung to their fingers in passing through them, divines who had preached a morality which they did not practise, and fluent orators who had made speeches which they knew to be nonsense, philosophers who had spun out of moonshine systems of the universe, distinguished pleaders who had defeated justice while they established points of law, writers of books upon subjects of which they knew enough to mislead their readers, purveyors of luxuries which had added nothing to human health or strength, physicians and apothecaries who had pretended to knowledge which they knew that they did not possess,—these all, as the contents of their boxes bore witness against them, were thrust back into the rejected herd.

There were some whose account stood better as having at least produced something of real merit, but they were cast on the point of wages; modest excellence had come badly off; the plausible and unscrupulous had thriven and grown rich. It was tragical, and evidently a surprise to most of us, to see how mendacious we had been: how we had sanded our sugar, watered our milk, scamped our carpentering and mason's work, literally and metaphorically; how in all things we had been thinking less of producing good work than of the profit which we could make out of it; how we had sold ourselves to tell lies and act them, because the public found lies pleasant and truth expensive and troublesome. Some of us were manifest rogues who had bought cheap and sold dear, had used false measures and weights, had made cotton pass for wool, and hemp for silk, and tin for silver. The American pedlar happened to be in the party who had put a rind upon a grindstone and had sold it as a cheese. These were promptly sifted out and placed with their fellows; only persons whose services were on the whole greater than the pay which they had received were allowed their certificates. When my own box was opened, I perceived that though the wages had been small the work done seemed smaller

still, and I was surprised to find myself among those who had passed.

The whistle of a train was heard at this moment coming in upon the main line. It was to go on in half an hour, and those who had been turned back were told that they were to proceed by it to the place where they had been originally going. They looked infinitely relieved at the news; but, before they started, a few questions had to be put to them, and a few alterations made which were to affect their future. They were asked to explain how they had come to be such worthless creatures. They gave many answers, which came mainly to the same thing. Circumstances had been against them. It was all owing to circumstances. They had been badly brought up. They had been placed in situations where it had been impossible for them to do better. The rich people repeated that they had never been informed that any work was expected of them. Their wants had all been provided for, and it was unfair to expect that they should have exerted themselves of their own accord when they had no motive for working. If they had only been born poor all would have gone well with them. The cheating tradesman declared that the first duty of a shopkeeper, according to all received principles, was

to make money and better his condition. It was the buyer's business to see to the quality of the articles which he purchased; the shopkeeper was entitled to sell his wares at the highest price which he could get for them. So, at least, it was believed and taught by the recognized authorities on the subject. The orators, preachers, newspaper writers, novel writers, &c. &c., of whom there were a great many, appealed to the crowds who came to listen to them or bought and read their productions. *Tout le monde*, it was said, was wiser than the wisest single sage. They had given the world what the world wished for and approved; they had worked at supplying it with all their might, and it was extremely hard to blame them for guiding themselves by the world's judgment. The thieves and vagabonds argued that they had been brought into existence without their consent being asked: they had not wished for it; although they had not been without their pleasures, they regarded existence on the whole as a nuisance which they would gladly have been spared. Being alive, however, they had to keep alive; and for all that they could see, they had as full a right to the good things which the world contained as anybody else, provided they could get them. They were called thieves. Law and language were made by the

property owners, who were their natural enemies. If society had given them the means of living honestly they would have found it easy to be honest. Society had done nothing for them—why should they do anything for society?

So, in their various ways, those who had been 'plucked' defended themselves. They were all delighted to hear that they were to have another chance; and I was amused to observe that though some of them had pretended that they had not wished to be born, and had rather not have been born, not one of them protested against being sent back. All they asked was that they should be put in a new position, and that the adverse influences should be taken off. I expected that among these adverse influences they would have mentioned the faults of their own dispositions. My own opinion had been that half the misdoings of men came from congenital defects of character which they had brought with them into the world, and that constitutional courage, right-mindedness, and practical ability were as much gifts of nature or circumstance as the accidents of fortune. A change in this respect was of more consequence than in any other. But with themselves they were all apparently satisfied, and they required only an improvement in their

labourer's cottage. She was to attend the village school, and rise thence into a housemaid. The fine gentleman was made a ploughboy. The authors and preachers were to become mechanics, and bound apprentices to carpenters and blacksmiths. A philosopher who, having had a good fortune and unbroken health, had insisted that the world was as good as it could be made, was to be born blind and paralytic, and to find his way through life under the new conditions. The thieves and cheats, who pretended that their misdemeanours were due to poverty, were to find themselves, when they arrived in the world again, in palaces surrounded with luxury. The cup of Lethe was sent round. The past became a blank. They were hurried into the train; the engine screamed and flew away with them.

'They will be all here again in a few years,' the station-master said, 'and it will be the same story over again. I have had these very people in my hands a dozen times. They have been tried in all positions, and there is still nothing to show, and nothing but complaints of circumstances. For my part I would put them out altogether.' 'How long

is it to last?' I asked. 'Well,' he said, 'it does not depend on me. No one passes here who cannot prove that he has lived to some purpose. Some of the worst I have known made at last into pigs and geese, to be fatted up and eaten, and made of use in that way. Others have become asses, condemned to carry burdens, to be beaten with sticks, and to breed asses like themselves for a hundred generations. All animated creatures tend to take the shape at last which suits their character.'

The train was scarcely out of sight when again the bell rang. The scene changed as at a theatre. The screen was rolled back, and we who were left found ourselves in the presence of four grave-looking persons like the board of examiners whom we remembered at college. We were called up one by one. The work which had passed the first ordeal was again looked into, and the quality of it compared with the talent or faculty of the producer, to see how far he had done his best; whether anywhere he had done worse than he might have done and knew how to have done; while besides, in a separate collection, were the vices, the sins, the selfishnesses and ill-humours, with, in the other scale, the acts of personal duty, of love and kindness and charity, which had increased the happiness or lightened the

sorrows of those connected with him. These last, I observed, had generally been forgotten by the owner, who saw them appear with surprise, and even repudiated them with protest. In the work, of course, both material and moral, there was every gradation both of kind and merit. But while nothing was absolutely worthless, everything, even the highest achievements of the greatest artist or the greatest saint, fell short of absolute perfection. Each of us saw our own performances, from our first ignorant beginnings to what we regarded as our greatest triumph; and it was easy to trace how much of our faults were due to natural deficiencies and the necessary failures of inexperience, and how much to self-will or vanity or idleness. Some taint of mean motives, too, some desire of reward, desire of praise or honour or wealth, some foolish self-satisfaction, when satisfaction ought not to have been felt, was to be seen infecting everything, even the very best which was presented for scrutiny.

So plain was this that one of us, an earnest, impressive-looking person, whose own work bore inspection better than that of most of us, exclaimed passionately that, so far as he was concerned, the examiners might spare their labour. From his earliest years he had known what he ought to do,

and in no instance had he ever completely done it. He had struggled; he had conquered his grosser faults; but the farther he had gone, and the better he had been able to do, his knowledge had still grown faster than his power of acting upon it; and every additional day that he had lived, his short-comings had become more miserably plain to him. Even if he could have reached perfection at last, he could not undo the past, and the faults of his youth would bear witness against him and call for his condemnation. Therefore, he said, he abhorred himself. He had no merit which could entitle him to look for favour. He had laboured on to the end, but he had laboured with a full knowledge that the best which he could offer would be unworthy of acceptance. He had been told, and he believed, that a high spirit, not subject to infirmity, had done his work for him, and done it perfectly, and that if he abandoned all claim on his own account, he might be accepted for the sake of what another had done. This, he trusted, was true, and it was his sole dependence. In the so-called good actions with which he seemed to be credited, there was nothing that was really good; there was not one which was altogether what it ought to have been.

He was evidently sincere, and what he said was

undoubtedly true—true of him and true of every one. Even in the vehemence of his self-abandonment a trace lingered of the taint which he was confessing, for he was a polemical divine; he had spent his life and gained a reputation in maintaining this particular doctrine. He believed it, but he had not forgotten that he had been himself its champion.

The examiner looked kindly at him; but answered, 'We do not expect impossibilities; and we do not blame you when you have not accomplished what is beyond your strength. Only those who are themselves perfect can do anything perfectly. Human beings are born ignorant and helpless. They bring into the world with them a disposition to seek what is pleasant to themselves, and what is pleasant is not always right. They learn to live as they learn everything else. At first they cannot do rightly at all. They improve under teaching and practice. The best only arrive at excellence. We do not find fault with the painter on account of his first bad copies if they were as good as could be looked for at his age. Every craftsman acquires his art by degrees. He begins badly; he cannot help it; and it is the same with life. You learn to walk by falling down. You l arn to live by going wrong

and experiencing the consequences of it. We do not record against a man "the sins of his youth" if he has been honestly trying to improve himself. We do not require the same self-control in a child as in a man. We do not require the same attainments from all. Some are well taught, some are ill taught, some are not taught at all. Some have naturally good dispositions, some have naturally bad dispositions. Not one has had power "to fulfil the law," as you call it, completely. Therefore, it is no crime in him if he fails. We reckon as faults those only which arise from idleness, wilfulness, selfishness, and deliberate preference of evil to good. Each is judged according to what he has received.'

I was amused to observe how pleased the archbishop looked while the examiner was speaking. He had himself been engaged in controversy with this gentleman on the share of 'good works' in justifying a man, and if the examiner had not taken his side in the discussion he had at least demolished his adversary. The archbishop had been the more disinterested in the line which he had taken, as his own 'works,' though in several large folios, weighed extremely little; and, indeed, had it not been for passages in his early life—he had starved himself

at college that he might not be a burden upon his widowed mother—I do not know but that he might have been sent back into the world to serve as a parish clerk.

For myself, there were questions which I was longing to ask, and I was trying to collect my courage to speak. I wanted chiefly to know what the examiner meant by 'natural disposition.' Was it that a man might be born with a natural capacity for becoming a saint, as another man with a capacity to become a great artist or musician, and that each of us could only grow to the limits of his natural powers? and, again, were idleness, wilfulness, selfishness, &c. &c., natural dispositions?—for in that case——

But at the moment the bell rang again and my own name was called. There was no occasion to ask who I was. In every instance the identity of the person, his history, small or large, and all that he had said or done, was placed before the court so clearly that there was no need for extorting a confession. There stood the catalogue inexorably impartial, the bad actions in a schedule painfully large, the few good actions veined with personal motives which spoilt the best of them. In the way of work there was nothing to be shown but certain

books and other writings, and these were spread out to be tested. A fluid was poured on the pages, the effect of which was to obliterate entirely every untrue proposition, and to make every partially true proposition grow faint in proportion to the false element which entered into it. Alas! chapter after chapter vanished away, leaving the paper clean as if no compositor had ever laboured in setting type for it. Pale and illegible became the fine-sounding paragraphs on which I had secretly prided myself. A few passages, however, survived here and there at long intervals. They were those on which I had laboured least and had almost forgotten, or those, as I observed in one or two instances, which had been selected for special reprobation in the weekly journals. Something stood to my credit, and the worst charge of wilfully and intentionally setting down what I did not believe to be true was not alleged against me. Ignorance, prejudice, carelessness; sins of infirmity—culpable indeed, but not culpable in the last degree; the water in the ink, the commonplaces, the ineffectual sentiments; these, to my unspeakable comfort, I perceived were my heaviest crimes. Had I been accused of absolute worthlessness, I should have pleaded guilty in the state of humiliation to which I was reduced; but

things were better than they might have been. I was flattering myself that when it came to the wages question, the balance would be in my favour: so many years of labour—such and such cheques received from my publisher. Here, at least, I held myself safe, and I was in good hope that I might scrape through. The examiner was good-natured in his manner. A reviewer who had been listening for my condemnation was beginning to look disgusted, when suddenly one of the walls of the court became transparent, and there appeared an interminable vista of creatures—creatures of all kinds from land and water, reaching away into the extreme distance. They were those which in the course of my life I had devoured, either in part or whole, to sustain my unconscionable carcass. There they stood in lines with solemn and reproachful faces—oxen and calves, sheep and lambs, deer, hares, rabbits, turkeys, ducks, chickens, pheasants, grouse, and partridges, down to the larks and sparrows and blackbirds, which I had shot when a boy and made into puddings. Every one of them had come up to bear witness against their murderer; out of sea and river had come the trout and salmon, the soles and turbots, the ling and cod, the whiting and mackerel, the smelts and whitebait, the oysters,

the crabs, the lobsters, the shrimps. They seemed literally to be in millions, and I had eaten them all. I talked of wages. These had been my wages. At this enormous cost had my existence been maintained. A stag spoke for the rest. 'We all,' he said, 'were sacrificed to keep this cormorant in being, and to enable him to produce the miserable bits of printed paper which are all that he has to show for himself. Our lives were dear to us. In meadow and wood, in air and water, we wandered harmless and innocent, enjoying the pleasant sunlight, the light of heaven and the sparkling waves; we were not worth much; we have no pretensions to high qualities. If the person who stands here to answer for himself can affirm that his value in the universe was equivalent to the value of all of us who were sacrificed to feed him, we have no more to say. Let it be so pronounced. We shall look at our numbers, and we shall wonder at the judgment, though we shall withdraw our complaint. But for ourselves we say freely that we have long watched him—him and his fellows—and we have failed to see in what the superiority of the human creature lies. We know him only as the most cunning, the most destructive, and, unhappily the longest-lived of all carnivorous beasts. His delight

is in killing. Even when his hunger is satisfied he kills us for his mere amusement.'

The oxen lowed approval, the sheep bleated, the birds screamed, the fishes flapped their tails. I, for myself, stood mute and self-condemned. What answer but one was possible? Had I been myself on the bench I could not have hesitated. The fatal sentence of condemnation was evidently about to be uttered when the scene became indistinct, there was a confused noise, a change of condition, a sound of running feet and of many voices. I awoke; I was again in the railway carriage; the door was thrown open; porters entered to take our things. We stepped out upon the platform. We were at the terminus for which we had been originally destined. Carriages and cabs were waiting; tall, powdered footmen flew to the assistance of the duke and duchess. The station-master was standing hat in hand and obsequiously bowing; the minister's private secretary had come to meet his right honourable chief with the red despatch-box, knowing the impatience with which it was waited for. The duke shook hands with the archbishop before he drove away. 'Dine with us to-morrow?' he said. 'I have had a very singular dream. You shall be my Daniel and interpret it for me.' The archbishop

regretted infinitely that he must deny himself the honour; his presence was required at the Conference. 'I, too, have dreamt,' he said; 'but with your Grace and me the realities of this world are too serious to leave us leisure for the freaks of imagination.'

THE END.

Richard Clay & Sons, Limited, London & Bungay.